

TOOLS FOR TRANSFORMATION

A Personal Study

Adam Curle

Foreword by Elise Boulding

'... fields of blood and torture, lands dessicated by mindless economic planning and minds dessicated by false teaching; what tools can transform these awful failures of humanity?'

E. Boulding

For many reasons the 1990s present us with an inescapable truth: that as individuals we do matter. Our thoughts, actions and values have an impact on the world we live in. In **Tools For Transformation** Adam Curle shares the experience of a life's work in mediation, development and education, and offers genuine avenues for constructive change.

Mediation and peacemaking are described in both large-scale violent conflict situations and in inter-personal relations. Development is concerned with the character and structure of human society (for the good of people) rather than with purely 'economic growth' considerations. Education is examined both in the social context of whole communities and in the essence of learning/teaching relationships for individual growth. Adam Curle draws on wide practical experience and examples. He also blends the influences of contemporary depth psychology, modern physics, Buddhism and Quaker practice.

These ideas and suggestions are made accessible to readers on varied levels for personal choice. **Tools For Transformation** reminds us of our participation and potential in a wider wholeness – our interconnectedness with the fabric of life.

This is a book about transforming ourselves and the world we live in.



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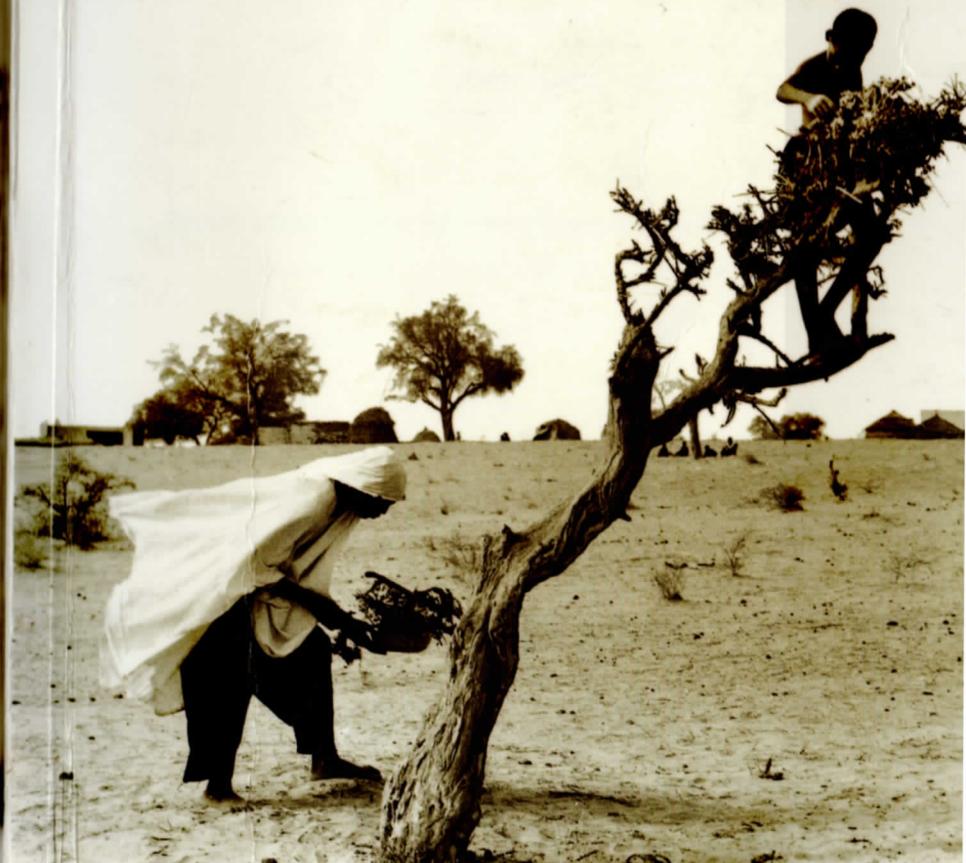
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to assess as a life. We must simply have faith that good lives have a better impact on the whole than bad ones, and that most mediators are able to do more good than harm.

Why I've scanned these pages

Adam Curle (1916 - 2006) was a veteran mediator of the Biafra conflict, a key figure in the team that averted probable genocide there after the war with Nigeria (1967-70). General Ojukwu of Biafra credited the British mediating team with an "Absolute dedication to humanity ... an infinite capacity for neutrality." General Gowon of Nigeria said of their work: "The basis is a belief in God and humanity."

Adam came to his Quaker pacifism after serving as a major in the British Army where he developed an interest in the psychology of war trauma. His father, the journalist Richard Curle, was a friend of Joseph Conrad. Awareness of "The Heart of Darkness" would have been a familiar family theme.

I met Adam in the mid-1970s, just after he had been appointed as the first professor in Peace Studies at the University of Bradford. I was an undergraduate student at Aberdeen. Just his bearing had a huge effect on me and on my slowly evolving understanding of nonviolence. I vividly remember my first sight of him at a World University Service conference. He sitting relaxed, surrounded by a group of students, and wearing blue jeans. In those days, it was startling and liberating to see a professor so dressed. (These days, it's more startling to see one in tweeds!)

In the 1980s I was involved with Quaker Peace & Service. A concern of Friends House at that time was to capture the insights of veteran mediators like Curle before that WW2 generation of experience was lost. I remember, in particular, a piece he wrote for *The Friend* about the need to "unclench the fist around the human heart." The pages that follow from his best book were originally scanned for a friend's use, but am placing them on the Rare Third Party Resources section of my website in that spirit of retaining insights that risk getting lost.

Adam's understanding of "unmediable violence" is of great importance. It is a reminder that we might participate in the work of God, but should not make the error of imagining we must achieve things beyond human limitations, or that we share a God's-eye-view of the whole picture. On the long front that is reality, our part is to serve as befits our position. I therefore find that Adam's recognition that there are times when, (like those assembled at the foot of the Cross), we can do nothing but bear witness, is very powerful. Far from being a recipe for despair the notion of "unmediable violence" is its paradoxical antidote. It counsels patience - keeping our lamps trimmed in the night and waiting, critically poised for when the time might be right. I've also included in the scan his summary of part 1 of the book (*Peace Making/Mediation*), and his Buddhist-informed appendix on the Three Poisons.

Alastair McIntosh, www.alastairmcintosh.com/general/resources.htm, 2015.

Chapter Fourteen

Unmediable Violence

There are some types of violence for which mediation, as we have been discussing it, is impractical. For example, if the protagonists, both or either, are not serious about it there is no point in trying to act in the way I have described. There may be several reasons for their rejection of mediation. Their distrust of outside intervention may be excessive or they may just dislike the idea that others should in any sense be admitted to the intimacy of their affairs. Perhaps more often it is because they think they will get a better deal by going on fighting than by bargaining; indeed there is usually a faction that is of this mind even if the leaders favour negotiating a settlement — this makes the task of mediators difficult and even hazardous.

Factions certain of victory over their opponents are most likely to reject mediation. These opponents are usually oppressed minorities struggling for their rights (or, as in cases such as South Africa, majorities). The powerful oppressors certainly do not want any interference in their work of restoring 'law and order', and have little doubt that they will succeed. It is only when they are less successful than they had expected and feel the cold winds of fear and failure, that they will countenance mediation. So it was in Zimbabwe. When the liberation struggle began sporadically and on a very small scale, the white hegemony treated it as a temporary irritation. It was only when the fighting intensified with the formation of the Patriotic Front that they were forced to political manoeuvring — the device of a pseudo-majority government — and eventually to the conference table. This point has not yet, of course, been reached in neighbouring South Africa.

In 1971, when what is now Bangladesh was still East Pakistan, one wing of the whole country of Pakistan, I was faced with a dilemma. East Pakistan, nominally an equal partner in the nation with West Pakistan, was in fact a vassal province. It was controlled and economically bled — its jute earned most of Pakistan's foreign

currency — by the West Pakistan-dominated central government. When the provincial assembly of East Pakistan voted itself a greater degree of autonomy (very reasonably, since it had the majority of the national population) the army, composed entirely of West Pakistanis, was sent in to crush any move for actual independence. There ensued a period of unprovoked carnage and destruction in which one million people are said to have died.

I was deeply saddened by these horrible happenings. I had met and courted my wife in East Pakistan and in addition was distressed by the behaviour of the West Pakistanis, among whom I had lived happily for several years. Consequently I was glad to be asked to go on a mission of mediation between the two halves of a country I wished so well. However, the more I thought about it, the more acutely my dilemma developed, and eventually, for the following reasons, I decided not to go.

I knew that the leadership in West Pakistan (which had much changed since I had been there five years before) was violent and obdurate. They were having no difficulty in imposing their will on East Pakistan, and I was sure that the drunken general (he had appeared on television while intoxicated — a shocking thing in a Muslim country) who was then president, would not have slightest time for mediators. If, improbably, he did have any use for us it would be as virtually his emissaries to urge the Bengalis of East Pakistan to abandon their futile resistance (a few bridges had been blown up and sentries strangled). If I had been able to meet the resistance leaders I could have tried to persuade them to give up this useless struggle that only brought terrible reprisals upon their people. If I had gained access to the general, I could only have urged him to moderate the intemperate ferocity of his army in order to avoid irreparable damage to the economic usefulness of East Pakistan. And in the most unlikely event that our efforts had brought the worst of the atrocities to an end, what next? The miserable status quo that had brought about the conflict in the first place would have continued; eventually, after a period of sullen passivity, there would have been a further outbreak of desperate violence and intensified repression. This, at any rate, was how I argued with myself.

Mediation may also be difficult if not out of the question in cases

of great confusion, as when there is not a single struggle, but multiple conflicts. Northern Ireland is perhaps a good example. Between whom is a mediator to mediate: the Provisional IRA, the Official IRA, the British Government, the Ulster Defence Association, the Ulster Volunteer Force, various smaller and occasionally significant splinter paramilitary groups both Catholic and Protestant, the Irish Government, the various political parties? Unionist and Nationalist and others involved have at one time or in one way or another been in conflict with each other. Many would say that the core struggle is between the British Government and the IRA, but from this fundamentally unpeaceful relationship, which reflects the age-old unpeaceful relationship between the English and the Irish as a whole, stem many other quarrels that criss-cross the scene of life in Northern Ireland. Mediation as discussed hitherto in these pages, is impossible. Comparable comments might be made concerning the situation that developed in Sri Lanka after the advent of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in 1987. Instead of a relatively straight struggle between the Sri Lanka Government and five major guerilla groups (which, as so often happens with resistance movements, were squabbling lethally with each other) there were now three elements: the Sri Lanka Government, the Indian Government and the IPKF, and the Tamil Tigers, who had decided to continue the struggle. To these was then added a fourth, the revolutionary JVP, who were equally opposed to the other three — a viperous tangle of conflicts that defies any conventional approach.

What I did in relation to East Pakistan was precisely nothing. Now I think I was wrong. Fortunately for my conscience, the Indians resolved the conflict by invading East Pakistan, defeating the Pakistani army and thus opening the way to the independence of East Pakistan and the establishment of Bangladesh. But I ought not to have lost the opportunity to visit the area and renew my friendships with the many people on both sides whom I had known. One can never be sure, unless on the spot, how many opportunities there may be for service and for what I would call second-level mediation. I mean by this term, mediation which has no pretensions to paving the way to important negotiations, but which may smooth out relatively small scale pains and misunderstandings.

Such mediation may, however, actually lay the foundations for regular mediation once the political/military situation is more propitious. Our work in Zimbabwe was greatly facilitated because some of the Quaker team had known many of the Black African leaders and some of the Whites for a number of years. Thus, when the time for mediation was ripe, relationships of trust and friendship already existed.

In the case of Northern Ireland, where there is little chance of regular mediation between two, or even more, protagonists, there is always much to be done to soften hatreds, to explain fears and to ease hurts. Occasionally, if one is alert to the openings, it may be possible to contribute to some larger resolution. Such a chance was seized by Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams, the women who won the Nobel Peace Prize for their determined and most courageous stand against violence. Other equally if not more effective work had to be done without publicity. A greatly respected friend of mine whom I will simply call K worked quietly as a go-between for eight years, in considerable danger and under great strain, until ill-health forced him to give up. I was privileged to be associated in a minor fashion with one of his activities which I can describe:

I believed that the fighters, primarily the provisional IRA and the UDA were much respected by the community, even if their tactics were not, for their courage and dedication to what they thought in their different ways to be in the interests of their country. He also believed that their joint concern for such non-sectarian matters as housing, jobs, public services and the future of their children would, if they could discuss them together, be seen to transcend what separated them. If they could then join forces on these issues, acting in some senses as an unofficial local government, they might together resolve the political problems; these, in the current situation of violence and rule by the British Government in Whitehall, could not be tackled properly. I was able to suggest at a high level to the British authorities that if the citizens of Northern Ireland were able to demonstrate a greater responsibility for running their own affairs and settling their own differences — now an impossibility, since they had no responsibility to exercise — the British could gradually reduce their measure of control.

I was much encouraged by attending a clandestine week-end meeting in which the 'hard boys' of both communities were brought together. At first they were wary and suspicious, but later, mellowed by Guinness and Bushmills Irish whiskey, had a friendly and constructive exchange. The British authorities also appeared to feel that this approach was promising. They were at this time secretly considering the possibility of withdrawing from Ireland, but were restrained by the fear of bloodshed that might follow. Consequently, any possibility that the two communities might together settle their own affairs satisfactorily was rather attractive, as indeed it was to the government of the Republic. But it all came to nothing. The responsible minister was promoted to a higher office and his successor had an entirely different approach which precluded all contact with paramilitary organisations. But I still think the whole exercise, or should I say series of exercises because J worked in this area of co-operation for years, was important and worthwhile. People met and came to respect and even like each other who would never otherwise have had the chance to. The value of these contacts and moments of sympathy can surely never be wasted.

So I conclude that mediation at one level or another can continue in almost all circumstances. Even if one is not shuttling between heads of state or other high officers, there are always other painfully unpeaceful relationships to be assuaged. This is intrinsically valuable and demands the same attitude and approach as international mediation to which, indeed, it may lead.

Resort to violence, though less so in the case of limited war to correct injustice or to thwart aggression, is a product of the illusion that such action can really resolve problems that arise essentially from ignorance of our own nature. This, of course, is true of all the ills that beset us. However, in times of violence it is hatred somewhat more than craving that is the dominant poison. As the conflict intensifies, so does the bitter unreasonableness of the hatred. I remember how, during the war in Sri Lanka, the feelings of the Sinhalese for Tamils grew increasingly exaggerated and grotesque. Such phenomena are sadly universal.

Chapter Fifteen

Conclusions

In the Introduction to this Part, I briefly mentioned a variety of circumstances in which mediation may be practised: in marriage guidance, in community conflict, between neighbours, between criminals and their victims, by high powered and very visible notables, by invisible nonentities like Quakers, both between and within nations, between workers and management, within institutions of every sort, by officials and by non-officials, over long or short periods. I certainly do not have experience of all of these, but like every other human being, I have practised mediation, had it practised on me, or watched it practised by others, in many types of situations other than those about which I have written here.

What all these circumstances have in common is the need, as the word implies, for persons in the middle, people who stand between those quarrelling with each other, trying to induce them to talk sensibly together. (Let me stress 'sensibly', there is no point in enemies meeting unless they intend to do serious business together and — eventually — to become friends). Such situations have, however, many things in common.

In the first place, the quarrel, disagreement, conflict of interest, injustice, oppression, or misunderstanding associated with the fractured relationship, represents a more fundamental disorder. The individuals or groups or leaders who claim to speak for the group, are acting out of the illusion of separation. They do not feel, or no longer feel, any identity with each other; they have no sense that by hurting each other they are hurting themselves. This exclusion of the other as the 'enemy' is something we take for granted in war, when we read with grim satisfaction of 'their' losses or the bombing of 'their' towns. But also in a marital break-up the sudden callousness towards a partner and the children involved is all too common. Formerly friendly neighbours become meanly unpleasant; work-mates, now on different sides in a union dispute, attack each other viciously.

The essence of situations calling for mediation is the spirit of violence. The dictionary definition of the word is the illegal, unjustified or excessive use of force. The violence may not be physical, but the violence of the heart, the ill-wishing of the other, can be equally damaging.

The emotional accompaniments of violence tend to make the task of mediators extremely difficult. The longer the quarrel lasts, the more its origins become swathed in hostile myths and fantasies. This is one reason why the conflict in Northern Ireland, which has lasted for hundreds of years, is so intractable, and why family feuds and vendettas in some parts of the world, such as the Northwest Frontier of Pakistan, continue for generations.

These fantasies are a source of fear, suspicion, resentment and hatred. All such negative emotions poison the minds of the protagonists, distorting their sense of reality. The work of mediators, whether faced with bitterly hostile married couples, or national leaders bound on mutual destruction, or workers and management engaged in a suicidal confrontation, is never easy; the shedding of blood marks a steep increase in unreason and in the obduracy of their task.

It may, of course, often be argued that it is not unreasonable to be engaged in a quarrel, whether it be domestic or international, physically non-violent, or lethally destructive; that aggression must be opposed, tyranny overthrown, the bonds of oppression broken. Few would deny that some causes are just and some unjust. I am simply saying, however, that when mediation is desired by the protagonists — which means that in some measure they also desire peace — the emotional concomitants of unpeacefulness greatly impede it.

I am also suggesting that whatever the circumstances, the mental obstacles to peace are similar in kind, though of course not necessarily in gravity. Mediators need the same psychological equipment of impartial good will, perseverance, imperturbability and objectivity; the same flexibility and preferably the same sense of humour whether they are dealing with a crisis in their home, or neighbourhood, or place of work, or are called in because someone's marriage is on the rocks, or because of an industrial dispute or an international war. The actual techniques and special

knowledge that are needed will vary depending on the character and location of the quarrel. These, however, I believe to be less important than the attitudes and mental approach I have tried to describe.

The task of mediation, always, everywhere, is to find ways of reducing tension and enabling the opponents to stand back from the obsessive fears, suspicions and hatreds that have come to dominate their minds; to see each other and their dispute more rationally in terms of what is of real interest to them and others involved; and to consider, however sceptically, the possibility of mending the relationship and becoming friends who can together strive to make the world more peaceful.

This is when the process of mediation, as I have defined it, comes to an end. Now the protagonists must talk to each other (perhaps with the help of a third party), negotiate, and discover themselves how to solve their joint problem. Above all, they must learn how to solve the problems of *themselves*.

PART II

Social Change and Development

Appendix 2

Three Poisons

To the extent that we are ignorant of or insensitive to our own nature, we lose contact with the reality of phenomena. Because we are out of touch, so feeling a certain loss or inadequacy, we are driven to fabricate another reality, the 'I' which is also the eye through which we view the world. We see it as a dualistic world of 'I's and 'you's, goods and bads, friends and enemies, spirit and matter, this and that. Having no sense of a non-dualistic world of interconnectedness we create one around ourselves based on these dualities; what confirms 'truth' is good, what denies it is bad.

We long for these desirable things. They may be states of mind, types of relationship (dominant or perhaps submissive), qualities of character appearance or ability, power, possessions, position, any great or little thing, however simple or grotesque that somehow distinguishes us from and preferably sets us above our fellows. I know one man whose unfortunate life permitted him only to boast that when he had been in prison, it wasn't any ordinary old clink but a maximum security gaol where his mates had been the Great Train Robbers, as one might say that one had been at Harvard where one was a friend of John F. Kennedy.

All these attributes, qualities or achievements, real or imagined, are moulded together unconsciously into an identity, contradictory, complex, subtle and all-pervading. Although kaleidoscopically responding to every change, inner and outer, they give us the sense of self that shields us from the panic and disaster of not knowing who we are — but fearing the worst.

Many of the components of these 'I's, these false identities, are essentially crude. Even those woven around, for example, delicate questions of taste and artistic sensibility, can be reduced to such material things as books, paintings or hi-fi equipment. What matters is not just the ability to purchase such things, but in the process to purchase the envy of others. It is by such means that we feed the ego. We satisfy the craving for a sense of selfhood to fill the hollow hunger

of ignorance by nourishment of a sort that confirms our existence and our goodness — as judged by the standards created by ourselves and probably our society. The more we get, the better; if it is moral qualities we crave, we may even ascribe to ourselves more humility or more modesty than X or Y!

In general, however, we need more of some quite straightforward commodity — a new car or a better hi-fi system. These satisfactions tend to be addictive and are required in increasing doses. I noticed this at the outset of my career. My 'I' was vastly gratified and enhanced the first time I was asked to give a public lecture. The second time, however, my delight was much less intense, my ego much less inflated. Does this mean, I asked myself, that I shall have to give increasingly prestigious addresses to get the same quota of self-satisfaction; and what happens to my ego if I don't?

All the time we are working to satisfy our craving, we are aware at the back — and occasionally at the front — of our minds that our happiness is transitory and precarious. We try to pretend that we only need x, y or z, perhaps a certain income level, a particular object, a particular person as friend, lover or possession to be happy for ever. But we also know that we may lose these things in a hundred ways. We may in addition be conscious that the whole argument is essentially unsound. If I may again quote from my own experience, I learned this at the age of five.

I yearned for a particular toy gun and pestered my mother to get it for me. At first, being a woman of peace, she refused. However she eventually gave in. I recall thinking to myself that I now had everything I could ever want and would be happy until the end of my life. But a day or two later I found myself weeping bitterly at some small disaster. No, I said to myself, lasting happiness can only come from an inner state and not from external things (not of course that I used those words).

Because happiness and identity, two conditions that overlap and intermingle, are in constant jeopardy, we are constantly alert like animals both in fear of predators and eager for our own prey, for what may harm and what enhance our fragile sense of 'I'. We dislike and/or fear people and circumstances that may diminish it. We envy those who have more of what we feel to be the happiness prescription (a pleasanter job, a finer house, more successful children). We are

jealous of those who are doing better. We feel in varying degrees hostile to those who are different from us; because we don't understand them, we worry about what they might do to harm us. This accounts for much of the tension between the races, religions, classes, linguistic groups and perhaps the sexes.

In Tibetan iconography the relationship between ignorance, hatred and craving, what they term the three poisons, is symbolised by a snake, a swine and a cockerel. They circle endlessly gnawing at each other's extremities.

The basic human condition of enslavement to these interconnected, mutually reinforcing negative feelings has led to certain recognisable patterns of thought and behaviour.

They have given rise to an active philosophy that is predominant in the westernised world. I would refer to it as competitive materialism. Competitive, because its objective is gratification gained by doing better than who or whatever may be the rival. Material, because in the last resort it can be reduced to the creation of wealth or power. This philosophy legitimises, almost sanctifies, what in other times and places might have been excoriated as greed.

No doubt the accumulation of property has for millennia, at least since tribes of herders and gatherers became settled agriculturists, a characteristic of human society. But the extremes of competitive materialism which confer high moral status on success are relatively new. Even in my life time I have seen them spread into remote corners of the world where, although some men were undoubtedly aggressive and self-seeking, this was not considered a virtue. As a young man, wandering in remote regions of the Middle East, the Balkans and Lapland, I learned that the most respected members of most communities were by no means the richest. They were admired instead because they were highly devout, or hospitable, or deeply versed in tribal tradition, or were poets or story tellers. The landlord or merchant may have been envied, but not admired.

Now, however, the values have changed. People are admired because they have been to the town, set up a business. Now their worth can be measured by the fact that they have a Mercedes Benz, or an air conditioned house, or even perhaps just a bicycle. Competitive materialism has spread like a moral plague.

The ignorance that impels us to seek a stable and satisfying sense

of self through material means (craving) has obvious negative implications (hatred) for human relations.

In the most basic sense, to the extent that the 'I' is in control, we use people as things to serve our identity purposes. We may, of course, genuinely love them, but even so sometimes an element of ego may assert itself, rendering us at least temporarily insensitive or manipulative for our own inner ends; we try to evoke from them, irrespective of their own feelings and needs, the response that will gratify our 'I' or soothe its hurt. We can, in fact, be quite ruthless in the promotion and protection of 'I', manoeuvring those about us, including and perhaps especially our 'nearest and dearest'. To the degree that they submit and play our game, we reward them with love (that is to say, our favour); to the degree that they do not, they incur our enmity. Thus a man who claims to love his sons may compete viciously with them, attempting to assert his superior manhood (at least in his own eyes).

In this sense people become commodities, to be used like money or possessions, as building blocks for 'I'. But impermanence predominates. People and circumstances change in the constant flux pervading the system of which all are part; the woman or man to whom we look for gratification may withhold it, or perhaps our needs change so that s/he can no longer provide it. So a shadow of anxiety lurks below the surface of our mind, loaded with the potential menace of anger, hatred, resentment, jealousy or terror.

It is only to be expected that in situations where ego needs are institutionalised, such negative emotions form part of the pattern. Competitive rivalries and bitterness, ruthlessness towards the opposition or inadequate colleagues, though perhaps somewhat regulated by wise legislation, are accepted as part of the scene. If we manipulate our friends, we can certainly do the same to our competitors.

Thus the three poisons introduce their venom of anarchic heartlessness into all areas of our lives. Moreover, it spreads beyond the relatively humdrum doings of you and me and our personal and working relationships. It pervades our whole civilisation.

The psychological forces we have been discussing have crystallised into structures that dominate our lives. The vast network of

economic institutions, from tiny business enterprises to the enormous transnational corporations, the banks and the stock exchanges, together provide a framework for almost everything we do. We may not like them, we may deeply disapprove of them, but for most of us it is almost impossible to do without them. Here let me pause to make an important point. I am not arguing that we should (if we could) abolish all such institutions; we do need some bodies to organise the production and distribution of goods of all sorts in our ever more densely populated planet. I am simply saying that although their functioning represents a genuine effort to meet essential human needs, it also reflects something else: this is the desperate rapacity that represents one aspect of our universal endeavour to gratify egos that are hurt, lonely and frightened because they are illusions, and are severed from the reality of being.

Nor are economic institutions the only ones utilised, created or perhaps hi-jacked by the collective 'I' of humanity trying to compensate for its plight. Almost any organisation can provide us with a chance to establish and confirm our sense of self; the club we proudly belong to, the learned society that confers status in our profession, the old school society that reminds us of the one time when we were important. All these and countless others provide the opportunity for us to succeed (and, of course, to fail); among them the political party provides perhaps the greatest scope. One type of institution is, however, perhaps most closely related to our main theme.

This is military, the armed services, the associated civilian organisations, the ministries of defence, the staff colleges, the arms factories, the intelligence agencies and so on. These serve (in our terms) a number of purposes. They offer the opportunity for domination and the expression of the violence often aroused by frustration and despair, they protect what our acquisitiveness has enabled us to collect, and they help us to gain control of, or to acquire, fresh sources of wealth.

The cancerous growth of these institutions, financial, political and military, has brought us to the brink of the abyss. They have become so swollen and monstrous that it is hard for us to connect them with something so personal as the demands of the false identity, the 'I'. But together they provide both the justification for and the means of

our search for power position and thereby, and most importantly, of identifying ourselves. We take a deep pride in our group (whatever group is involved); our army is composed of 'our boys'; our money is, in a sense 'me'. All these are relations between a bogus 'I' and objects which are treated solely by the criterion of their service or dis-service to our identity. This perhaps introduces a new idea that large groups of people may have a collective 'I' in the sense that circumstances can bring about a general concept of human and social needs and of how to gratify them.

I do not necessarily mean this in any quasi-mystical sense of a layer of consciousness shared by members of the same community or nation. We do, however, often seem to incorporate into our sense of self the fact of belonging to this or that nation, church, profession, organisation, etc. Our personal sense of self is then affected by what happens to the larger group. I have noticed this effect especially in the case of leaders of embattled nations: the valour of the troops is *their* valour, the victory *their* personal victory, the defeat *their* personal defeat. In this sense the opponent is not an impersonal enemy, but a personal one; he not only poses a material threat but a more subtle one to the 'I'. We hate him.

It would be an exaggeration to say that all institutions implicated with military or financial issues are direct crystallisations of the three poisons. Indeed this could not be said of barter economies, subsistence farming, police who in times of trouble protect their communities, or co-operative enterprises of many sorts. Nevertheless, the extent of activities attributable in the first place to acquisitive greed or to hatred is enormous and all pervading. For example, it has been calculated that at least 100 million people are engaged in work directly or indirectly involved with the military, mainly in Europe and North America, and that in the latter some 15% of the US work force is so engaged.

As I have said, such activities have no doubt always existed. However their present lethal interrelationship probably began to take shape around the end of the Middle Ages. Then a number of trends that have become closely interwoven began to develop. These were: — The emergence of the modern state in embryonic form with the beginnings of a centralised administration, replacing such ramshackle agglomerations as the Holy Roman Empire.

— The development of armed forces to replace the somewhat haphazard assemblies of the armed retainers of nobles (who tended to drift away at harvest time!) for the temporary use of kings wanting to go to war.

—The birth of modern financial institutions, such as the Fugger bank, the Banco Giro of Venice, and the Exchange Bank of Amsterdam.

—A new philosophy, even theology, of wealth deriving largely from interpretations of the teachings of Calvin (but spreading to other branches of the Church and even to the Muslim world). These seemed to suggest that God showed his favour to those elected to join him in the next world by showering on them material benefits in this one. Thus the idea that wealth and virtue were somehow correlated began to take shape.

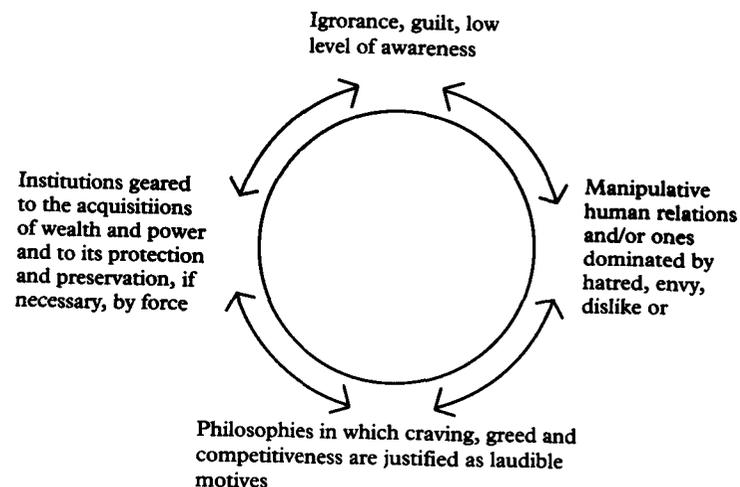
—Science and hence technology, after a long period of stagnation, began to take off with the work of such as Galileo and Copernicus.

These five trends interacted in a variety of ways. The armies served the nations in their efforts to conquer and expand and so to acquire new national wealth to build better armies and thus to increase their resources. The banks and other financial institutions helped them in this respect. And as the business systems grew, so the political structures and principles within which they operated became better structured to the important goal of acquiring riches. The new philosophy contributed by promoting the spirit of capitalism. The emergent technology served not only by improving weaponry, but by facilitating the development of new industries and improving old ones.

This concatenation of conditions has contributed immeasurably to the state of the world as it is today: the high complexity of the global economy; the terrible sophistication of our weapons; the power that even the democratic state can exercise over its people; the ever growing gap between the rapacious rich and the poor; the forward surge of science and technology; the danger of universal destruction by nuclear war or accident, or the murder of the biosphere, dangers to which both of the foregoing have led.

To this sorry pass we have been impelled by the mindless and relentless pressure of the three poisons.

The arguments of the last few pages can be drawn together in a diagram showing the operation of the three poisons.



Lest this pessimism seem extreme, I would briefly mention here that the essential nature of humankind is also revealed in the many compassionate and creative developments which have occurred during the same period: a new and powerful if not yet sufficiently widespread spirit of universalism, countless agencies, small and large, public and private, designed to serve humanity both locally and internationally; a true sense of the interdependence of all things. A comparable diagram could be drawn to show how knowledge and compassion establish warm, unselfish and co-operative human relationships, generate the spirit of respect and reciprocal service and create institutions designed for the benefit of all. All this is indeed being done, but it could also all be lost.

There is currently considerable debate over the respective social roles of politicians and church people. The former tend to maintain that the latter should confine themselves to purely spiritual matters and leave questions regarding society and social policy to them. Church people on the whole reply that policies which adversely affect

human well-being are not simply social but also have moral implications and hence a spiritual dimension.

I don't find it helpful to argue about dichotomies. That between spiritual and social seems to me to be false. Indeed I distrust the dualistic implications of the concept 'spiritual' which divides the world between what is pure and what is gross. I find it more helpful to think that we are all, in our separate spheres, engaged in the quest for reality. And reality is neither spiritual nor material, the concern of either politicians or clergy; it is as it is.

The preceding pages and the diagram try to show in a crude fashion how things affect each other. How one attitude of mind, ignorance, produces others, craving and hatred; how these influence our relations with others and the institutions we create; and how these latter affect our mental outlook, for we cannot be brought up in the ambience of institutions without being influenced by them. So, if we are concerned about one aspect of life, we must logically be affected also by all the others.