

working for peace since 1934  
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# peace matters

WORKING FOR PEACE WITHOUT VIOLENCE



**The Maiwand Lion in Reading commemorates an earlier British military failure in Afghanistan. When will they ever learn**

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The next PPU Council meeting will be held on 5 december

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**W**hen compulsory military conscription (also known by the high-minded name of National Service, during which young men were made to do pointless tasks) ended in 1960, the military began to fade somewhat from public view and concern. But since the armed forces still needed a steady stream of volunteers they could not afford to be completely forgotten. To promote themselves and recruit new bodies, a programme of displays and appearances was developed, occurring at public events, fairs and festivals, in town centres and schools. At one such exhibition (this one was about Military Intelligence) a PPU leaflet of the time was displayed. Beneath it a caption explained how the military were keeping an eye on an organisation such as the PPU, which aimed to undermine the state. Perhaps not the most serious example of intelligence failure...

Britain's participation in military attacks (on states that posed no threat to any national interest) brought military issues to wider public attention and debate. Although opinion polls are an unsatisfactory guide to what people think, they do give us a clue or two. In the opening phases of the latest Gulf war, support for the war fluctuated – up when there were perceived successes, down after perceived failures or problems. We are a fickle lot. Objection to war in most cases is conditional. Even the 'big' anti-war march before the attack on Iraq was launched was not unconditionally against war or even that war; many were

merely against the latter as long as it lacked UN sanction. It's tempting to think that the idea that war is an effective means of dealing with problems is hard-wired into our brains, but it's not; in truth we get it with our mother's milk and at our father's knee. If, like a national football team, the military are winning, we love them and support their war; if not, enthusiasm wavers.

There is, of course, a hard core of believers. Much of the establishment, naturally; the military and their families, of course; many veterans; and the managements and workers in a whole host of businesses and institutions that benefit from war. War is highly profitable – and not just for the likes of BAE or the pension funds that rely on those profits. War sells newspapers, magazines, and innumerable books. It helps to fund museums of dubious value and maintain institutions that promote belief in the nobility and heroic nature of the soldier who sacrifices himself in a noble cause, for which act we are expected to be profoundly grateful. This, indeed, is one of the reasons why some people buy red poppies.

Enthusiasm for Britain's two current wars has been flagging – they are not making Britons feel proud. So desperate have things become that Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Richard Dannatt, took time out of his holidays to visit the troops in Afghanistan and talk to them about the medals they might get (apparently a matter of some concern among the troops). In an interview he said that the Army was 'up for it' as long as soldiers were looked after and felt valued, supported and thanked for their efforts. It's tempting to feel sorry for the man and not just because he had to break into his holiday. Writing to the Sun newspaper he said: 'Although the fight is tough, their morale is sky high.' But elsewhere he observed that it is bad for the troops' morale that their relatives have to pay the postage for morale-boosting parcels. Royal Mail, he said, should pay for them instead.

Strapped for cash and in dispute over pay, Royal Mail promptly replied to Dannatt's sug-

## conscience in cold storage

Jan Melichar



The Maiwand Lion in Reading was unveiled in 1886 and named after a village in Afganistan; it was built to commemorate the deaths of 329 British soldiers in the Battle of Maiwand in 1880. The fact that this battle, one of the largest of the Second Anglo-Afghan War, was lost by the British is of course not mentioned anywhere on the monument. Some 50 years later a monument to commemorate the British route was erected in Maiwand Square in Kabul. Who knows what monument will result from the latest failure in Afghanistan.

gestion in the negative. With costs of £6 million per year you can see why. But wind forward one day – and ‘Royal Mail is proud to announce today that it will be making special arrangements for a free parcel service to British troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.’ Royal Mail’s Chairman, Allan Leighton, said: ‘Royal Mail wants to see our frontline troops get as much support as possible.’ The Sun and the Daily Mail take the credit for this volte-face. Quite why Royal Mail should be subsidising this or any other war is a question that has not been asked; – it’s also one that is hard to answer.

A significant part of the answer surely lies in the coercive grip that military values have on our minds, and in the consequent deep-seated acceptance of war as a problem-solving institution which seems to spurn self-critical thinking about its purpose. Part of the answer must also lie in the inability, or unwillingness, to think about a military person’s central tasks, which in one way or another involve the mutilation of human flesh. As we move closer to Remembrance Day we will hear more about the ‘dangerous’ nature of the job – not for the person in the gun sight but for the owner of the trigger finger.

Pacifists and other critics of war are made to feel that a critical view of those supposedly risking their life on our behalf is cold-hearted and repugnant. But is that how it is? Listen to what soldiers say when not in propaganda mode. Many relish the fighting, they are indeed ‘up for it’; fighting for them is more exciting than any computer game, more engaging than anything in civilian life. Which is possibly why many become mercenaries – or security operatives as some prefer to be called – as soon as they get out of the forces. Those who take risks take them willingly, for diverse reasons, not all altruistic. There are also, of course, the many who fight when told to (‘it’s the job’); and the majority, who tap keyboards, cook, drive trucks and shift

heavy loads.

Sometimes we hear about an instance of ‘heroic’ action in Iraq quickly followed by the distribution of medals, usually when someone risks all kinds of hazards for members of their team. The courage to help one’s mates is rightly applauded but the context must not be ignored. What creates the opportunity for this courage is an illegal and pointless war. In a very real sense, therefore, when ‘honouring the brave acts’ one is also approving military action and inadvertently condoning the war. Perhaps the truly brave thing would be to say No and refuse to take part in the pointless destruction of lives. But this would take a much more difficult and calculated courage.

In a recent broadcast about the work of chaplains in Iraq, many worried about how to help soldiers clearly aware that their cause is unpopular. ‘It is a difficult thing to say and do,’ explained one chaplain, ‘but by taking the Queen’s shilling we are putting elements of our conscience in cold storage, and in order to help the guys we might not be economical with the truth but we might want to give them encouragement and help rather than pull them down.’

Unlike that chaplain, most of us have not taken the Queen’s shilling, and we should be more clear-sighted. Every death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, wrote John Donne. Military deaths no more, or less, than any other. We should rage and struggle against the system that sends young men (and nowadays some women as well) to destroy other people’s lives, rather than honour the destroyers.

More importantly perhaps, we should be working to dismantle the institutions which perpetuate inhuman values, and which seek profit from the misery of other people. Perhaps, too, we should not give comfort to warmongers whoever they are and in whatever benevolent guise they may appear.



Playtime at Faslane.

## Faslane 365 Big Blockade 1st October

On 1st October 2007, after a year of nonviolent blockading of the nuclear submarine base at Faslane, Faslane 365 is celebrating the civil resistance against the UK’s illegal weapons of mass destruction.

Find out more at  
[www.faslane365.org](http://www.faslane365.org)



**get your white poppies at [www.ppu.org.uk](http://www.ppu.org.uk)**

## International Day of Non-Violence

**A**s a motley collection of war making and torturing nations signed up for the United Nations International Day of Non-Violence to take place on Gandhi's birthday in October 2 we are reminded of Gandhi's vigorous defence of the Peace Pledge Union's radical anti-war stance which came under sustained attack in the Indian press in October 1936 almost exactly 71 years ago. Non-violence', writes Gandhi, 'is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater and superior to brute force.' – an ideological position few of those who claim that he has been an inspiration would share. 'Non-violence is inconsistent with the possession of other people's countries' he writes.

On a visit to India Brown laid a wreath at the Gandhi memorial in Delhi, and praised the courage shown by Gandhi in the fight for India's independence, and Margaret Thatcher's struggle against communism. You get the feeling that he is missing something – you don't have to struggle through Gandhi's slightly unwelcoming prose to suspect that threatening nuclear annihilation was not his preferred way. No chance then that Gordon Brown is

about to start bringing the troops back to Britain or scrapping Britain's US sponsored nuclear weapons and start retraining the British military into a somewhat less armed humanitarian force. Readers may wish to enlighten him by explaining something of Gandhi's approach.

Curiously Gandhi has been steadily climbing the popularity chart. In a millennium poll in 2000, he was voted the greatest man of the past thousand years by readers of the BBC News website. Hmm - one has to hope that vote casters had a better understanding of what Gandhi was about than our Prime Minister.

More hopefully a recent survey of newly-appointed head teachers asked which management styles they felt to be most effective.

Gandhi, who led a campaign of non-violent civil disobedience in India against British colonial rule, typified the most popular style. In contrast, only about one in 10 heads approved of the 'coercive leadership' model of Winston Churchill.

See page 13 for **Gandhi and Churchill: A Dialogue on Power**



You may have noticed that Pavarotti has died but what you may not have read about is that in 2002 he added his name to the the Manifesto against Conscription and the Military System.  
[www.themanifesto.info](http://www.themanifesto.info)

# small arms

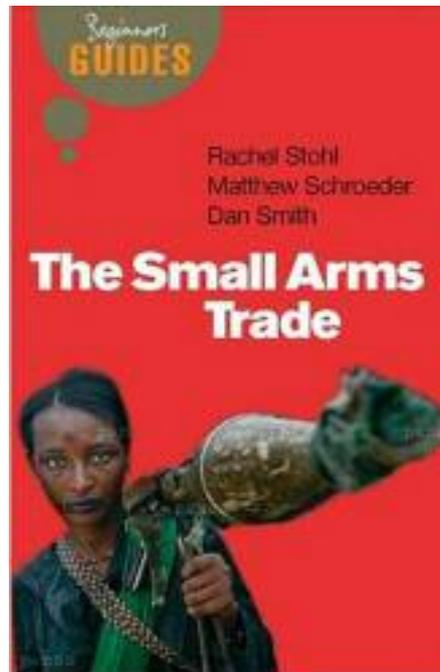
The trial in the Hague of Charles Taylor, former insurgency leader and then President of Liberia, has drawn attention to the trans-frontier flow of small but deadly weapons and the destabilization that such weapons produce. Since the trial has been put off at least until 7 January 2008, we are not likely to learn much that we do not already know about small arms flows for some time.

Small arms and light weapons are the weapons of choice for insurgents, terrorists, warlords and crime syndicates as we see in Afghanistan, Iraq, Colombia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. They are also the weapons of choice of governmental military, which is why they are also available to insurgents and warlords. Governments in the United Nations have failed to reach a common definition, but you will recognize a small arm when you get hit by one. They are generally considered to be weapons that can be carried by one or a small group of persons such as pistols, revolvers, assault rifles, machine guns, man-portable air defence systems, and howitzers with calibres of less than 100 millimeters. The Kalashnikov AK is the best known and the most widely used of small arms.

*The Small Arms Trade: A Beginner's Guide* is a good overview of the question, usefully supplemented by the SIPRI Yearbooks (published by Oxford University Press). It is estimated that there are more than 600 million small arms in global circulation. One would think that with so many weapons around the market would be saturated, but there are always new buyers and sellers. However *A Beginner's Guide* is not very helpful for those who want to get into non-governmental gun running, although the book has a good bibliography of articles and websites. Basically, gun running is part of a three-fold system of trafficking in drugs, weapons and people. Those who are already running the guns probably recruit from their own milieu

rather than from employment offices. Governments, which do most of the trafficking, have their own avenues of advancement for civil servants, though how 'kickbacks' for arms sales are done is not often set out in books on public administration.

It is likely that the editors at Oneworld hope to sell the book to those who oppose small arms transfers rather than those wanting to join in the business. Unfortu-



nately, the anti-arms buyers are not a very large market. While there are hundreds of thousands of people estimated to have been killed each year with such weapons, and many more are living in daily fear of armed violence, they do not read books on how to limit the arms trade. Some people have faith that governments will do something — faith being confidence in things unseen. In 2001, more than 140 states sought to address the proliferation of illicit small arms by agreeing to a UN Program of Action to Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. 'All its aspects' is only in the title since the unexamined legal sales is how most weapons get on the illicit market. In June 2006, the UN organized a review of the 5-years of action and was to set out steps for the future. However, no agreement proved possible. There was no review of the arms trade, illicit or legal, and no agreed upon steps for the future. In fact, there was no final document of the review conference — a sign of how deeply divided the governments were. Such arms control conferences usually have a 'final document' written well in advance of the conference with square brackets around the words on which there is disagreement. Diplomatic editors have long experience on making documents weaker so that at the end of a conference some text comes out allowing everyone to go home with the impression of having done something. That they could not produce even a weak final statement is an indication of how difficult it was to reach even a minimum agreement.

In the case of the illicit small arms review, China, Cuba, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, Russia and the USA led the way to do nothing. With such powerful leaders other states who also wanted to do nothing just sat back and shook their heads saying 'we can't go against the leaders' especially as Pakistan was speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference's 40 some members. Russia, the USA, and China all have friends or clients. Moreover, there is a procedural hangover from the Cold War years when governments felt that you cannot get disarmament by resolutions. Therefore consensus — reaching an agreement without a negative vote — became the UN way of dealing with arms

control issues. Thus, one small state can hold up the process. When you have China, India, Pakistan, Russia and the USA as a solid bloc of opposition, there is little that Norway or the Netherlands can do other than propose that 'the process should continue'.

There may be 'coalitions of the willing' as Norway has been creating, concerning cluster weapons. Ways must be found to reduce global suffering by opposing gun runners. The non-governmental International Action Network on Small Arms has done a good job of awareness-building and putting pressure on governments. As *The Small Arms Trade* stresses 'What is new is the ability of terrorists, criminals, renegade soldiers and guerrillas to cause many casualties and create extensive chaos and political upheaval in a very short time. Graves throughout Africa: in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia are mute testament to the deadly effects of recycled small arms and light weapons when governments fail to control their flow.'

It is up to us to transform the mute testament to a strong call to deal with a key threat to peace.

Rene Wadlow

*The Small Arms Trade: A Beginner's Guide*  
Rachel Stohl, Matt Schroeder, Dan Smith  
Oxford, Oneworld, 2007

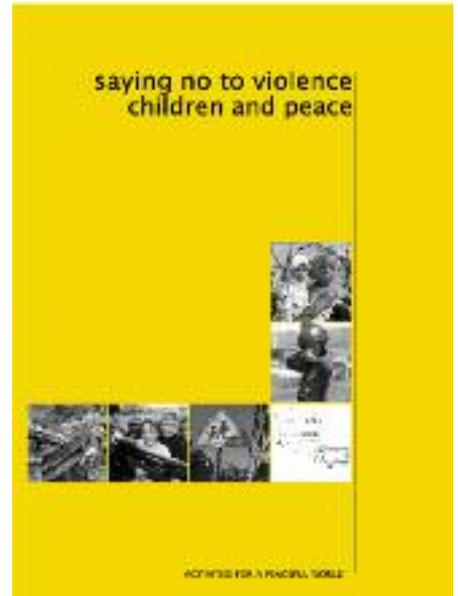
International Action Network on Small Arms [www.iansa.org](http://www.iansa.org)

## impact media violence has on children

A wider than expected government review of the impact media violence has on children was launched at the beginning of this month. Gordon Brown, entering the highly charged debate, stressed that he did not see the review leading to state censorship, but hoped it would lead to a common agreement between parents, programme makers and internet providers that new controls are necessary.

Childhood had become a popular area for politicians and is also being examined by the shadow higher education secretary, David Willetts. The protection of children on TV proved to be unexpectedly popular for the Democrats when first highlighted by Bill Clinton some years ago. The PPU's efforts in this area and its own examination of the issue, however, has not raised much media interest. Even Oxfam which has a number of the PPU's publication in its education catalogue found 'Saying no to violence - children and peace' too hot to handle. *Saying no* dissects the slippery meaning of violence and challenges the simplistic notion that we adults can make children more 'peaceful' without becoming more 'peaceful' ourselves.

'I would try to stop wars by bombers



dropping bombs on bomb factories.' says 9 year old Andrew in *Saying No*. You know he means well but already he has 'learned' that bombs do something useful.

*Saying No to Violence - children and peace* is available from the PPU. Price £7.00 plus £2.00 p&p.

**ACTION** Why not send a copy with a note to your MP as a contribution to the debate.



## exterminate, exterminate..

It is not clear what 'protection' anyone may get from Defcon 'a compelling online multiplayer strategy game based around the theme of global thermonuclear war'. The game, inspired by the 1983 children's film *WarGames*, apparently evokes the tension, paranoia and suspicion surrounding the Cold War era.

The player assumes the role of a General hidden deep within an underground bunker whose mission is to exterminate the enemy's civilian population while at the same time disabling the enemy's ability to retaliate. According to the makers 'You'll need to form fast, tactical alliances'. So there you have it killing just a few 'enemies' is losing the power to excite - extermination is now the name of the game.

## can you help?

We would very much welcome help with our Conscientious Objector Project.

We are looking for someone who can spare some time to help us put our CO resources into order. This will involve sorting and cataloguing paper documents so that they are easily accessible to staff and visitors and in a separate process help with developing a database of this material which eventually will be made available via our website. Some time commitment is essential; database skills are not required but an ability to organise a wide range of material or have some knowledge of cataloguing are important. Travel and lunch expenses are available.

Another way that members and supporters can help is by visiting their local libraries to find out what material they have relating to conscientious objection in the two world wars. A lot of interesting and valuable material lies unknown in libraries around the country. As we are trying to piece together the varied experiences of COs and their families and friends such material would be of great value to us and to the students and researchers that visit our archives.

Whilst some of this work is archival much of it will feed into the educational resources that we are producing. This work is as much about the present and the future as the past.

If you can help please contact Jan Melichar at the PPU office or via [jan@ppu.org.uk](mailto:jan@ppu.org.uk)

[www.coproject.org.uk](http://www.coproject.org.uk)



### Be better informed

For a different view of Remembrance Day and how it evolved get the **Voices for Peace** interactive CD from the PPU.

## military science marginalises environmental programmes

**A** new briefing from Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR) argues that flawed government thinking is driving a rapid expansion in the military influence over science and technology, US government spending on military research and development (R&D) is soaring (up 57% since 2001), while the UK government has rolled out two new military technology strategies in the last two years which contributing to an expansion of military involvement in UK universities.

SGR's briefing argues that government policies, which emphasise the application of military technology in dealing with complex international crises, are driving the continued expansion of military R&D in the USA, UK and elsewhere, despite obvious major shortcomings of such an approach - not least in current conflicts such as the Iraq war.

The briefing documents how government funding for military R&D dwarfs that spent on social and environmental programmes across the industrialised world. For example, in 2004, governments in industrialised countries spent a total of \$85 billion on military R&D, but only \$50 billion on R&D for health and environmental protection, and less than \$1 billion on R&D for renewable energy technologies essential for tackling climate change. A similar imbalance can be seen in UK spending.

Dr Chris Langley, lead author of the briefing, said: "This briefing updates our earlier research which highlighted the way that the UK military sector - including government departments and major corporations - has disproportionate influence over science and technology. That this military influence is being extended is all the more disturbing in the light of ongoing corruption investigations into top UK arms corporation, BAE Systems."

Dr Stuart Parkinson, Director of SGR and co-author of the briefing, said: 'Gordon Brown, in his recent speech at the UN, said that we should put science and technology at the heart of efforts to tackle social and environmental problems. Yet, it is clear that current UK science policy allows the military far too much influence in the sector, undermining that aspiration. We urge Mr Brown to put his money where his mouth is and force a shift in current R&D spending to prioritise social and environmental concerns.'

Dr Philip Webber, Chair of SGR and co-author of the briefing, said 'In David Milliband's first speech as Foreign Secretary he talked about the need for changes in the way that the UK engages in the international arena. But can the government really be serious about changing its approach to foreign policy while pursuing major new military technology projects, such as replacing its nuclear weapons system and building new aircraft carriers, at a time when science and technology skills are so urgently needed in areas such as renewable energy?'

<http://www.sgr.org.uk/>

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## problems with the hydra

It may be churlish to be slightly critical of some recent 'good news' stories such as two firms being thrown out at the beginning of the Defence Systems and Equipment fair in London for promoting leg irons which can be used in torture. A few days later an India government agency advertising its wares at the fair was accused of promoting landmines and as British law forbids this, customs officials were called. The agency denied that these are landmines but bomblets that can be fired at great distances – ha, said opponents, just like cluster bombs then. Reed Elsevier the organisers of the fair asked for the advertising brochure to be withdrawn. Reed Elsevier, a major publisher and owner of DSEi, recently announced that they plan to sell their arms fair by the end of the year.

It is important to see such moves – welcome and encouraging – but essentially peripheral to the trade in life destroying machinery to say nothing of their actual use.

Some more 'good news' is that a number of leading UK institutions are planning to withdraw hundreds of millions of pounds from firms linked to the manufacture of cluster bombs.

Earlier this year 46 countries, including the UK, committed to banning cluster bombs by next year, which together with the various anti cluster bomb campaigns may have provided some impetus to this move. Needless to say the United States is not one of the 46. Some of the major arms producers can expect to face a battery of questions from fund managers but strangely most deny having anything to do with cluster bombs.

In July French insurer Axa announced it was pulling its investments from companies that manufacture cluster bombs and the pension fund Hermes has recently written to the board of BAE to establish whether it plays a part in the industry. A number of Dutch institutions have also pulled out of investing in cluster bomb manufacturers after criticism in a television documentary. And Norway's Oil Fund has also left this market.

Enter the Hydra CRV-7 which according to the armed forces minister is equipped with 'multi-purpose submunitions' fired from Apache helicopters but does not fall within the government's 'understanding of cluster bombs'. The government admits that in tests it has a 6% failure rate, which campaigners against cluster bombs point out, is the very reason they object to it. The arguments between the MoD and campaigners on this issue get more complicated and akin to the number of angels which can dance on the head of a pin. The 'long term' danger posed by landmines and to a lesser extent by unexploded bomblets to people and economic regeneration is of course serious but more serious are the 'acceptable' weapons which of course cause far more harm.

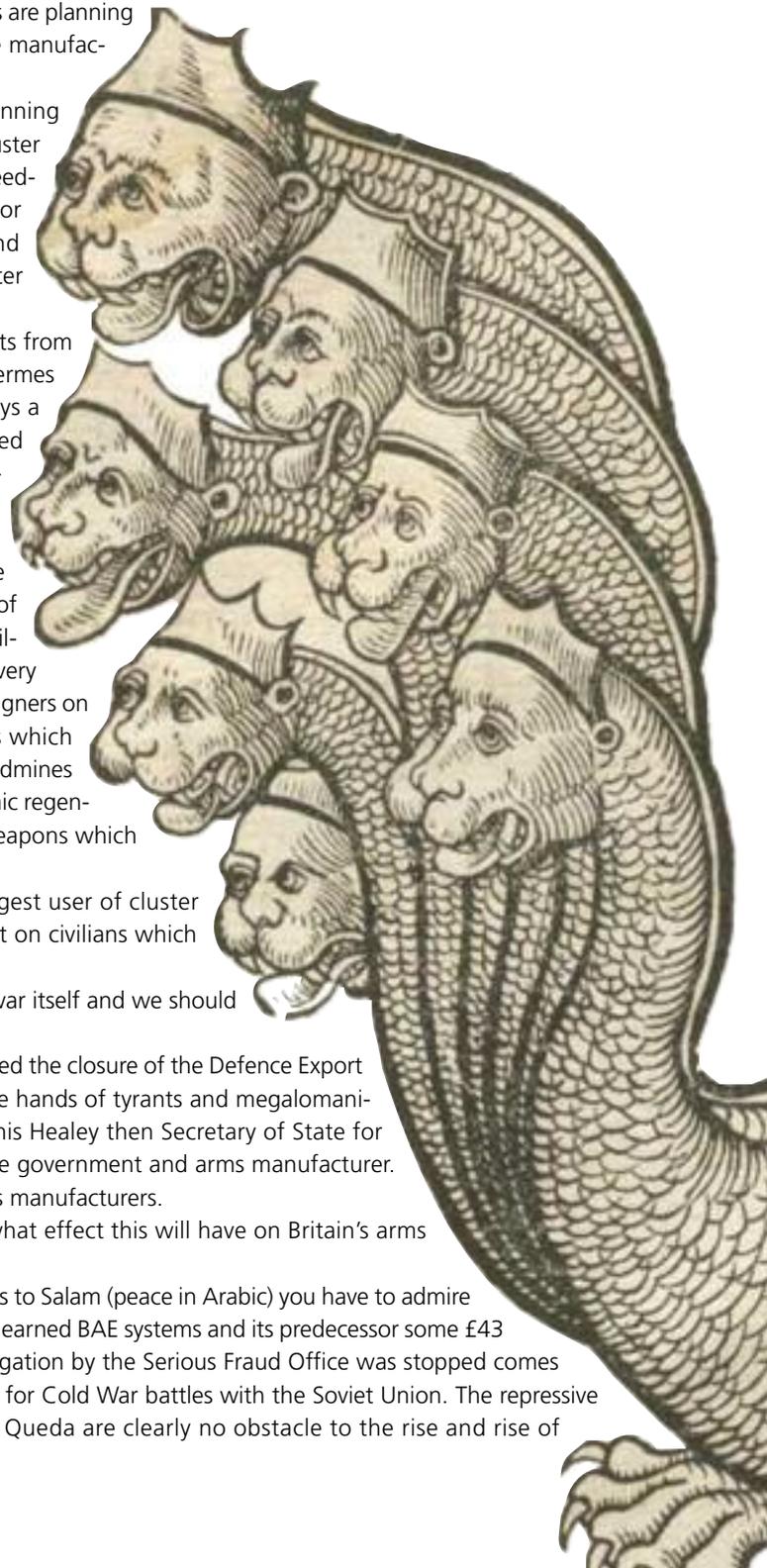
In the last ten years the UK government has been the third biggest user of cluster bombs in the world but has shown little concern about their impact on civilians which given its enthusiasm for war is perhaps not surprising.

It would be good to get rid of Hydra CRV-7 but the real hydra is war itself and we should not wait for Hercules to rid us of it.

And there is some more good news. The government has announced the closure of the Defence Export Services Organisation after 41 years of helping put weapons into the hands of tyrants and megalomaniacs around the world at taxpayer's expense. Set up by Labour's Denis Healey then Secretary of State for Defence it became the heart of an intimate relationship between the government and arms manufacturer. The military, MPs, prime ministers and royalty all pimped for the arms manufacturers.

The ending of this cosy relationship must be a good thing but what effect this will have on Britain's arms exports will not be clear for some time

As Al Yamamah (the dove in Arabic) Britain's biggest arms deal turns to Salam (peace in Arabic) you have to admire the cheek of the merchants of death and their publicists. Al Yamamah earned BAE systems and its predecessor some £43 billion from the deal with Saudi Arabia. Now that the bribery investigation by the Serious Fraud Office was stopped comes Salam a £20 billion arms deal for 72 Eurofighters originally designed for Cold War battles with the Soviet Union. The repressive nature of the Saudi regime and suspected of connections with al Qaeda are clearly no obstacle to the rise and rise of Britain's weapon makers.



### Learning history in school

A history curriculum is often a telling sign of how a nation and its elites see themselves: for example, as victims of colonialism or practitioners of imperial power. And there is increasing – and refreshing – debate about how history should be taught. In Ireland, during the 1980s, some influential people had grown uneasy: the old story (Ireland oppressed by the English for 750 years, bravely fought back in 1915 and were victorious) was not only oversimplified, it was fuelling conflict in the north. The Catholic Church had encouraged an apparent fusion between religion and patriotism – but now its influence was faltering. History lessons began to be more open-minded.

In Australia's classrooms, teachers are resisting patriotic history that omits important truths. 'We don't present one story, we use all the terms associated with white settlement: colonialism, invasion and genocide.'

In South Africa, 'the main message of the new school curriculum is inclusion and reconciliation'. Symbols and anniversaries have been redefined: for example, a date commemorating war between white settlers and Zulus is now an annual Day of Reconciliation.

Israeli revisionist historians have rewritten conventional accounts of their country's birth to reflect its mistreatment of Palestinians, and some leaders are pushing for a revised approach in schools, whose minister has ordered that textbook maps should clearly show the Green Line; she is also trying to bring back the teaching of Arabic, which has lapsed.

### Problems of war and law

One fundamental issue is the problem of taking a basically European institution (the Geneva Conventions and other international laws for the conduct of war) and trying to make it international. Can humanitarian law work in a world that is home to such a variety of cultures, ideologies and religions? Have our common perceptions of 'humanity' enough power?

Another problem: adapting the laws of war to accommodate the changes in the perception and nature of war itself, which are threatening the central tenet of the laws: the distinction between combatant and civilian.

Yet another worry, this one generated by the diplomatic processes which now produce the law. States can – and do – use them to secure the high ground in propaganda, not to promote humanitarian practice. States have also failed to develop procedures

## some thoughts for

that make the law effective: indeed, some states have leaders who actually do not want the law to work.

### The shadow of Hiroshima

*(From a letter by Canon Paul Oestreicher)*

By 1942 the deliberate killing of civilians on a vast scale had become part of allied war strategy. Whether it was criminal or not is a matter for the ill-defined laws of war. Whether it was morally defensible will always be debated.

Given the prevailing mood in 1945, the launching of the nuclear age on human targets was no huge departure. But President Eisenhower later said 'Japan was at that very moment seeking some way to surrender with minimum loss of face. It was not necessary to hit them with that awful thing.' Field Marshal Montgomery said: 'It was unnecessary to drop the two atomic bombs on Japan. It was a prime example of the declining moral standards of the conduct of modern war.'

### Women at war

There are nearly 18,000 women in the regular British forces, 1,600 of them serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. Officially they cannot serve in so-called close combat, deliberately to 'close with and kill the enemy'. In reality this boundary no longer exists. One Corporal, a nurse, routinely carries a pistol and assault rifle. 'The enemy doesn't recognise medical personnel to be left alone.' Her team partner adds, 'It is strange for a medic to think of taking a life, but you are a soldier first and you have to make sure the ground is safe before you can do the work of a medic.'

A Lance-Bombardier isn't unhappy that work in the artillery takes her closer to the action. 'If I have to kill, I have to. I wouldn't hesitate. You just have to think it's my life or theirs.'

An operator with the Royal Corps of Signals says to start with she just thought she'd love to go to war. 'I love it. You couldn't prise me away for all the money in the world. I'd rather die doing my job than die of cancer.'

### Lessons from the British Raj

*(from an article by William Dalrymple, 2007)*

150 years ago the British Empire found itself threatened by anti-colonial revolt, the largest and bloodiest so far seen. In putting down the revolt, British

# remembrance day

forces massacred not just the rebels and jihadists, but also ordinary citizens.

The lessons of the Indian Mutiny are very clear. No one likes people of a different faith conquering them, taking their land or force-feeding them improving ideas at the point of a bayonet. The British in 1857 discovered what Israel and the US are learning now, that nothing so easily radicalises a people against them, or so undermines the moderate aspect of Islam, as aggressive western intrusion in the east. The histories of Islamic fundamentalism and western imperialism have long been closely and dangerously intertwined. In a curious but concrete way, the fundamentalists of all three Abrahamic faiths have always needed each other to reinforce each other's prejudices and hatreds.

In many ways the legacy of the 1850s is still with us. Not only are westerners again playing their old game of installing puppet regimes, propped up by western garrisons, for their own political ends; more alarmingly, the intellectual attitudes sustained by such adventures remain intact. The old colonial idea of the Muslim ruler as decadent oriental despot lives on; and as before it is effortlessly projected on to a credulous public by warmongers in order to justify their imperial projects.

Today, West and East again face each other uneasily across a divide that many see as a religious war. Again, western countries, blind to the effects of their foreign policies, feel aggrieved and surprised to be attacked – as they see it – by mindless fanatics. Those who fail to learn from history are always destined to repeat it.

## Thinking ahead

*(from an article by Ulrich Beck, a professor of sociology, 2007)*

Climate change forces us to realise that the only way of setting up effective checks (on reducing emissions while allowing economic growth) is through fairness and equality, taking account of others in our decision-making.

We need a new cosmopolitan realism to tackle the challenges of terrorism, globalisation and climate change. Only a broad-based coalition that includes 'old Europeans', eco-conscious Americans, underdeveloped countries, developing countries, and civil society movements, can succeed. It is not a matter of undermining, let alone abolishing, nation-states. It is

a matter of restoring to them the capacity to act effectively, together and in collaboration with one another.

The vision of a cosmopolitan future combines the concern for national and global justice with an interest in the survival of each individual. In other words, the idea of having roots and wings at the same time could replace the worn out ideas of communism, socialism, neoliberalism and old Labour. The new cosmopolitan left might make the improbable possible: the survival of humanity beyond the 21st century without lapsing back into barbarism.

## 'The world through their eyes'

*(from an e-mail message by Alan Johnston, BBC's correspondent, 2006)*

There is something I remember from Grozny (the war-torn capital of Chechnya). I went into an abandoned apartment where a shell had come through the wall. If you looked around the room for a minute, you could see the life that used to go on in it. You could see the books that the family used to read, the sort of pictures they hung on the walls. From photographs you could see that they had three kids and that the eldest girl had graduated from university.

So much of the job of a journalist is trying to find the imagination within yourself to see the world through the eyes of the people in the story. Not just through the eyes of the Palestinian who has just had his home smashed, but also through the eyes of the three young Israelis in a tank who smashed it. Why did they see that as a reasonable thing to do? What was going through their minds as their tank went through the house? You have to give the whole picture. And when you are with one side in a conflict, you have got to put to them the best arguments of the other side, the toughest questions. The aim is absolutely not to smother the story with a search for 50-50 balance. If the truth is that the Israelis, or the Palestinians, have acted appallingly, then that is what your piece must end up saying.

Putting yourself in the shoes of the people in the story can only be done if you listen to them. And you've got to put the listener right there in the alleyways with the kids and the donkey carts, or on a Gaza beach with the surf and the wind.

And you've got to put yourself in the shoes of the listener as well, whether in Lagos or Lima or Luton, who may not know much about Gaza at all. If you were in their position, what background information would you need?

## what covenant? what nation?

It is no surprise that the British Legion has launched a campaign promoting the 'Military Covenant' a few weeks before Remembrance Day; it's what any PR adviser would suggest. While vigorously promoting its 'Honour the Covenant' campaign the Legion also stresses that it has no legal force; more tellingly, though you might not spot this in its publicity, the Legion does not want it to be entrenched into legislation. 'We believe that it is first of all, and should remain, a solemn and moral commitment.'

The state is and always has been mean with support for injured military personnel. Until Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries it was the monks that cared for injured soldiers; since then the state has grudgingly taken over. Arguably injured soldiers are far better treated today than they ever have been.

Whatever complaints soldiers may have about their treatment it is no reason for the

Legion to try and implicate us all and make us complicit in the state's war or try and guilt trip everyone with the 'ultimate sacrifice'. Let's be clear military personnel are state employees and some choose to be trained to kill and thereby put themselves in a position where they might themselves be killed. This is no covenant. The 'nation' is in no danger, and many would argue that Britain's current military activities are in fact endangering us.

There is, however, a danger that such 'good' work may inhibit progress to the provision of universal and high quality service. This is not the place to discuss such issues but it is worth noting that charities also have their ideological side, which can easily get mixed up with their 'primary' function.

The British Legion says that it 'provides financial, social and emotional support to millions who have served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces, and their dependants. Currently, nearly 10.5 million people are eligible for its support...' 10.5 million is an incredible figure. The Legion also calls itself the de facto custodian of remembrance and it is this with its 'glorious dead' that give it its unusual status within the wider public, not its financial, social and emotional support work similar to that done by the NHS and countless charities and others around the country.

Some historians have argued that the parsimonious way the British government treated veterans after WW1 meant that by having to spend a lot of time and energy into survival, vet-

erans had had little time (much to the government's relief) for engaging in revolutionary activities in the grim post war years. Their German counterparts on the other hand were extremely well cared for and had a lot more spare time for mischief. Who knows how things might have turned out had Germany treated their veterans badly while Britain lavished them with resources.

Much of the Army's recruiting efforts in the last two years focused on economic issues, using a marketplace philosophy to sell service as a career opportunity. The recruiting page of the Royal Army's website proclaims: 'As Britain's largest employer, the Army has over 15,000 vacancies annually for people of all ages, abilities and educational standards.' The site asks potential recruits, 'Do you want a career where you can earn £182 a week, in over 100 trades, with six weeks paid holiday and the opportunity to earn NVQ's and BTECs?' and to potential officers, 'Are you a graduate, under graduate or of graduate calibre and looking for an exciting and challenging career?'

Do we seriously believe that anyone of sound mind joins the armed forces to die for the nation?

## pupils against the military

Secondary pupils in Scotland are mobilising against military recruitment in their schools and pupils from Glasgow joined with Edinburgh's School Students Against War to launch a campaign to stop the army targeting children as young as 14.

The move follows a call by the Educational Institute of Scotland, the largest teaching union in Scotland for a ban on army recruitment teams going into schools, and members urge local authorities to examine whether the armed forces are gaining inappropriate influence over youngsters through outdoor weekends, DVD packs and helicopter visits.

'I thought school was the one place you could get away from the horror of the Iraq war, so I was shocked to go into the playground one day and see a helicopter and 20 army guys trying to recruit us', said 14 year old Lorna McKinnon.

MSP Christine Grahame, a former teacher who has campaigned against army recruitment in schools, shares the EIS belief that pupils in deprived areas have been targeted. She discovered that Govan High School in Glasgow received 14 regimental visits in one year. Similar protests have been made in Wales where councillors have shown that the army makes far more visits to schools in deprived areas.

MoD spokesperson denied that disadvan-

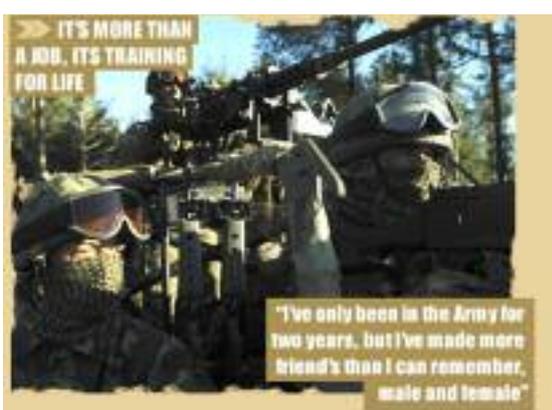
tagged areas were targeted but as army enrolment in Scotland and elsewhere is falling by a reported 3% a year such tactics would not be surprising

Last month the MoD launched a new online 'teaching' resource, Defence Dynamics, which includes 40 lesson plans for English, maths, science, geography and citizenship. Derek Twigg, parliamentary undersecretary for defence, told parliament £2.1 million a year was invested in recruitment teams, and the web resource would enable them to 'reach many more children and at a significantly lower cost'.

He said: 'Our main focus will be to provide teachers of 14 to 16-year-olds with pre-packaged electronic lesson plans with defence themes based on scenarios that reflect the professional work of the MoD and the armed forces.'

Mhairi Britton, 16 said: 'We watched the army recruiting DVD and I found it quite disturbing because of the slant on adventure and it all being a great thrill.'

Glasgow teacher Steven Dolan said: 'Teachers have found recruitment has increased quite dramatically. The army seems to have unlimited funds for outdoor weekends and so on, but teachers don't have money for photocopying.'



Legion to try and implicate us all and make us complicit in the state's war or try and guilt trip everyone with the 'ultimate sacrifice'. Let's be clear military personnel are state employees and some choose to be trained to kill and thereby put themselves in a position where they might themselves be killed. This is no covenant. The 'nation' is in no danger, and many would argue that Britain's current military activities are in fact endangering us.

The situation was a little different in the two world wars where one could make a stronger argument for a 'covenant' when rightly or wrongly people believed to be under threat. Then men were forcibly recruited into the armed forces and could reasonably argue that the state – the nation 'owed them' extra care. The 'nation' is a slippery concept and today it appears that the majority of its components are far from enthusiastic supporters of Britain's wars which no doubt is another reason for the 'Military Covenant' campaign.

Injured or otherwise afflicted people whether soldiers or the rest of us should not have to rely on charity in order to have access

# Gandhi and Churchill: A Dialogue on Power

Theodore Roszak

GANDHI: If I had been still alive at the time of your death, Sir Winston, I should have found it difficult to say very much that was favourable on your behalf. I hope you will at least appreciate the frankness of this confession.

CHURCHILL: Not only its frankness, Mr. Gandhi, but its justice. After all, I had no kind words to offer on your behalf upon your death.

GANDHI: Nor indeed during my life. I fear I never struck you as being much better than, as you put it, "a half-naked fakir."

CHURCHILL: That, sir, is a misquotation. What I really said was rather more severe. I called you a "seditious fakir."

GANDHI: Well, I do not take it unkindly that you should have called me either "half-naked" or "seditious." For, indeed, both were true of me: I was a revolutionary in a loincloth and am not insulted to have you say so. But that you should call me a "fakir"-a monk. I know what insult you intended by this. You intended to deny me the honour of sharing your own calling-that of a statesman.

CHURCHILL: Exactly so. Though why you should feel insulted by this I'm sure I don't understand. It was just as much a statement of fact as that you were "seditious." A monk, a mystic, a visionary-you might have been any of these. But a statesman-never!

GANDHI: I hope you will explain this to me, Sir Winston. A statesman is one who leads people, is he not? You must admit that many people followed where I led-in fact, many more, I think, than ever followed you.

CHURCHILL: A great many children followed Stephen of Vendome on the Children's Crusade. This did not make Stephen a statesman. For similar reasons of religious delusion, many millions followed you into a collective act of rebellion and folly for which your country is still paying the price of disunity and poverty. No sir, a statesman is not simply any Pied Piper who can beguile a crowd into following at his heels. That is far too simple. He is essentially a man who pursues realistic goals with a realistic appreciation of power.

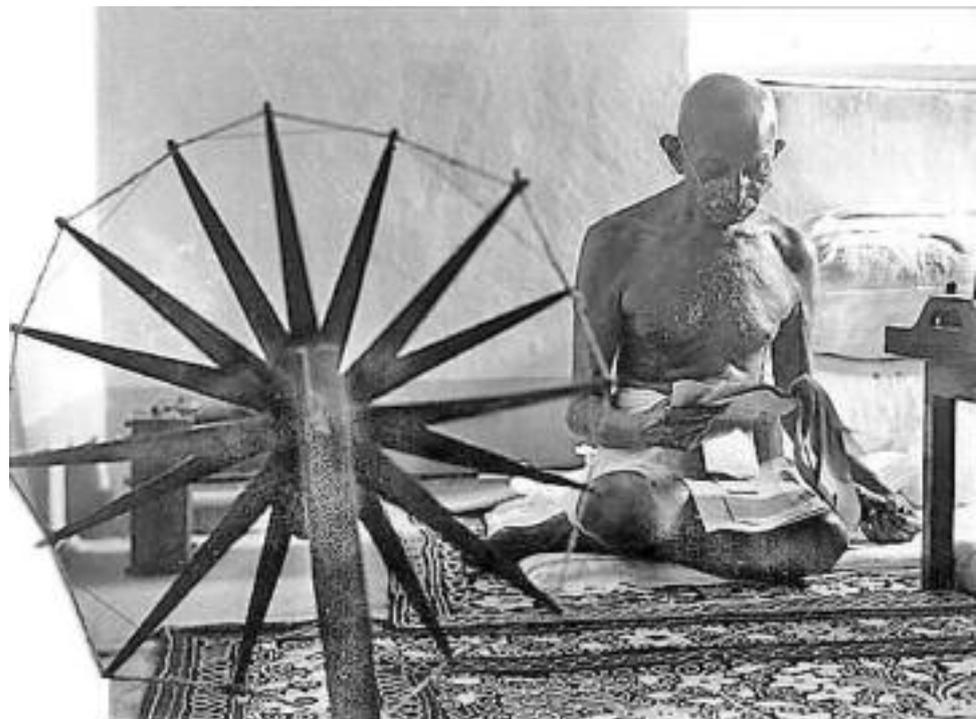
GANDHI: I shall leave to one side the question of who bears the responsibility for both India's disunity and her poverty. I doubt this is a matter that any British politician could pursue very far without embarrassment. But surely, Sir

Winston, you must give me credit for understanding how to wield power. Else how should I have managed to arouse so many millions to the struggle for independence?

CHURCHILL: You did that, of course, by playing freely upon their religious sensibilities, by indiscriminately stirring their moral passion.

GANDHI: But if this is a transgression, you clearly stand condemned of it yourself. After all, it was your gift of eloquence that inspired the British to their heroic war effort. My fasting and preaching was but the Indian counterpart of your magnificent BBC broadcasts. It seems to me we both stirred our people's moral passion, for we both knew that a people's moral passion is the greatest source of political power.

CHURCHILL: Ah, but I spoke of a "realistic appreciation of power." The difference between us is that I knew where moral fervour must be bounded by political necessity: I knew where the compromise must be struck between principle and practice, between the ideal and the possible. But you-you were an ethical inebriate: you spoke of "love" and "truth" and you went flat out for them-as a drunken man might leap off a housetop trying to embrace the moon, never caring what sacrifice of life or limb or simple self-respect it may cost. Why, in the name of "love," you would have denied your people



## DIALOGUE

proper defence against the Japanese! There are always cowards and simpletons around to cheer on such folly. But in my eyes, you were simply another sorcerer's apprentice of the human conscience. If I may quote myself: "The human race cannot make progress without idealism. . . ."

GANDHI: I know there will be a "but" in this somewhere.

CHURCHILL: Indeed there will: "but idealism at other people's expense, and without regard to the ruin and slaughter which fall upon millions of humble homes, cannot be regarded as its highest or noblest form." Painful as it may seem to a man of your "saintly" sensitivities, politics is the art of choosing among lesser evils for the sake of greater goods

GANDHI: And what was the obliteration bombing of "millions of humble homes" in Dresden and Hamburg deed for which you bear the primary responsibility? Was this a lesser evil or a greater good?

CHURCHILL: A great, a regrettably great, but still a lesser evil; a strategy that helped crush the enemy and end the war all the sooner. And so to save many innocent lives.

GANDHI: I wonder that you do not see how deeply warped must be any concept of "statesmanship" that forces so good a man as yourself to order the mass killing of innocent hundreds of thousands in Dresden and Hamburg-and this in defence of innocence! What you are saying, Sir Winston, boils down to the oldest of political clichés: the end justifies the means. But how can we talk any longer of ends and means as if they were separable rather than an indivisible spectrum of causes and effects? MINT politics, which I called satyagraha [nonviolent resistance-literally, "soul force"], insisted that to divide ends from means, even when this is done by a good man, is the beginning of evil and ultimately of political disaster.

CHURCHILL: Well and good But should I then have stunted in waging war against Hitler and by so doing have risked defeat? You know what Nazism meant. You know the risks we ran.

GANDHI: I know that Britain went to war to preserve the freedom of Poland and I know that Poland along with all the rest of Eastern Europe-is not free today. Similarly, I know the Americans went to war to overthrow the genocidal terror of Nazism and I know they finished by annihilating Japanese cities with atomic bombs.

CHURCHILL: Eastern Europe need not have suffered its fate, had my wartime counsels not been ignored.

GANDHI: You mean Eastern Europe might have been saved from total Russian domination by restoring a few selected bits of it to British and American domination. Just as you were quite willing to save India from Japanese domination-provided we agreed to accept indefinite British domination.

CHURCHILL: Do you deny these would have been lesser

evils?

GANDHI: But when shall we have done with seeking to calibrate and balance goods and evils with such impossible precision! Moral rights and wrongs are not simply so many onions and potatoes to be weighed up in a scale. To what last, least perceptible discrimination between the vile and yet more vile does this weighing of evils extend? You yourself called communism "a ghoul descending from a pile of skulls." Yet you allied with "Russian barbarism" to fight Hitler. You even said, "if Hitler invaded hell, it would make at least a favourable reference to the devil in the House of Commons." Apparently your "statesmanship" excludes not even an alliance with hell.

CHURCHILL: All this only proves that you were never a politician. You wanted perfection. You wanted moral purity. But the world is a mixed bag. There is evil in it, all too much evil. We must have the courage to be practical; which means, we must be prepared at times to weigh blood against blood, crime against crime.

GANDHI: I must protest, Sir Winston! How can you call me a political purist? Who would know better than I the perverseness and weakness of men? How many times did I fast to atone for my Himalayan miscalculations of human goodness? Of course there must be suffering and perhaps death wherever there is human conflict. But we shall never have the foresight or judgement to make careful predictions and discriminations your sort of statesman deals in. We think we have chosen a means which is a "lesser evil"- but it perversely generates an end we did not foresee and which is ten times worse than the evil we sought to elude. So I insist: what we really know of good and evil lies here before us in our immediate action. We must be good and do good now, not later. "The only guide to a man is his conscience." These are your own words.

CHURCHILL: Then what would you have had me do when the enemy was at our gates? Advise my people not to defy him?

GANDHI: The enemy at your gates in 1940 was the product of a long catalogue of vengeful and selfish actions in the 20 years before 1940-and further back than that. A catalogue to which your own people contributed heavily. Hitler was a monster of your own making.

CHURCHILL: An observation I made myself many times. I shall not dispute that. But you avoid my question: when he was at the gates, what should I have done then? Surrender? Should I have let him crush our liberty, destroy our dignity, our very souls?

GANDHI: I presume you speak symbolically, Sir Winston. It was, after all, not you who resisted the Nazis. It was the British people as a whole-as you yourself said: they were the lionheart, you were but the roar. Suppose Hitler had occupied your country. Occupation does not

imply surrender. Could Hitler have destroyed the souls or dignity of the British people, with their proud Dunkirk spirit? The British who occupied India could not destroy our souls or dignity. Were not your gallant people prepared to fight on the beaches, in the streets?

CHURCHILL: If it came to that, yes. But we would not have fought nonviolently as you desire. That would have been useless.

GANDHI: You say that, despite the victory we achieved over Britain by nonviolence?

CHURCHILL: You did not achieve that victory from my government, remember!

GANDHI: But we would have, you know. Even you we should have "weaned from error by patience and sympathy" - or forced into compliance by sheer dogged resistance. And out of our nonviolent struggle you see what has come: we have freed ourselves and we have made you a better, prouder people, because we avoided as far as possible bloodshed and hatred and so forced you to recognise the criminality of your position in India.

CHURCHILL: Our criminality indeed! Of course, you can never admit what Britain brought to India. But my father was right when he said, "Our rule in India is, as it were, a sheet of oil spread out and keeping free from storms a vast and profound ocean of humanity." And but for your revolutionary precipitousness, the Raj should have matured toward greater justice and enlightenment.

GANDHI: How typical of you, Sir Winston! Such patriotic generosity. So long as the downtrodden whether they were your own British working classes or our Indian masses-were willing to ask politely, wait patiently and accept with thanks, then of course you could be magnanimous with them, like a good father rewarding his children for their obedience. You could give social insurance and generous measures of self-rule. Never all the underprivileged wanted, but something more than they had. But let them once demand their rights and reach to take what was rightfully theirs-as your workers did in the General Strike-and there was no open hand, only a clenched fist.

CHURCHILL: You are deucedly clever at steering a conversation into irrelevant detours. I seem to remember your suggesting that your satyagraha could have been used successfully against Hitler. And your proof, amazingly enough, is that it worked against us in India. This is a very crooked argument, Mr. Gandhi. There is simply no comparison between the British Raj in India and the Nazi Reich in Europe. There is all the difference between them that lies between a not quite cloudless day and a starless midnight.

GANDHI: Of course you British prefer to flatter yourself on that score. You conveniently forget Amritsar and the Rowlatt Act, don't you? I think it almost fills the British with pride now to say that nonviolence worked against them; it surely would never have worked against other, less humane, less sportsmanlike people I like the Germans. But of course it did! You recall the success of the Norwegian teachers against Hitler.

CHURCHILL: An exceptional situation.

GANDHI: Every situation is an exception. For every situation is unique. How many such "exceptional situations" have men failed to recognise because of their blind commitment to armed force?

CHURCHILL: All that you say again proves you are no politician. For you cannot see the most obvious realities. I saw the horror and brutality of Nazism and knew that our flawed society and those of France and America-yes, even that of Russia-were better. We fought through to victory and we survived. Imperfect, yes. But amid our imperfections the ideals that Hitler would have ruthlessly blotted out survive. Satyagraha would have saved nothing from Hitler. War saved something. And intelligent diplomacy-in the Twenties and Thirties-would have saved everything, just as it can save everything now, if the Western nations can keep their heads and their nerve. What you fail to see is the way in which power can serve principle. But principle divested of power is doomed.

GANDHI: What you fail to see is that there are sources of power as yet untapped in men-the power of their love and their ideals. And this power is not incompatible with intelligent diplomacy. Remember, Sir Winston, your country never dealt with a diplomat so courteous and yet so cunning, and ultimately so successful against you, as this "seditious fakir." Indeed, my argument is that the power of love and idealism alone can generate intelligent diplomacy, by which I mean open communication and fair bargaining. What would a little love and honesty have done in 1919 to prevent 1939?

CHURCHILL: And what would a little air parity have done in 1937 to prevent 1939?

GANDHI: But must you always see power as a weapon? Is it not sufficiently clear that this kind of power- military power-can really no longer "serve principle"? This



policy of deterrence your Western societies now cling to involves you in a commitment to genocide, the very crime for which you punished the Nazis at Nuremberg. And if you should ever unleash that power, there will be neither principles nor people left in your societies. The technicians have, I fear, rendered your Realpolitik obsolete.

CHURCHILL: Not at all, sir. The weapons change, but not the ancient principle: si vis pacem, para bellum. In 1953 I said, "when the advance to destructive weapons enables everyone to kill everyone else, nobody will want to kill anyone at all." This is what deterrence amounts to, and what it requires is that we arm and remain armed as never before in history.

GANDHI: You can still believe that politics proceeds on the basis of such rational calculation-you who have seen madmen like Hitler rise up on the stage of history, you who saw relatively sane men blunder into catastrophe in 1914! When I hear you speak like this, I wonder that you can call me a mystic and a dreamer. I seem to hear the eloquent voice of a hopeless romantic: "the Byronic Napoleon," as my biographer Louis Fischer called you. You are someone whose politics belongs to the distant past, to the day of your great ancestor, Marlborough, when wars could be surgically neat and world affairs could be pursued like a sport among generals and gentlemen. But that is all over, you know. Ours is the age of the masses and of massive violence, a revolutionary age that requires a revolution in our conception of power. And this, for all my failures and miscalculations, is what I offered as a pioneer of nonviolence: a revolution in the meaning of power which called for "the vindication of truth by the infliction of suffering not on the opponent but on one's self."

CHURCHILL: And when I hear you speak, I hear an even more distant voice-the voice of untold numbers of prophets and visionaries, none of whose inspiration would have been preserved but for the grim resolution, the hard sense and the steadfast responsibility of the statesmanship that has always stood between civilised life and the barbarian at the gates.

GANDHI: I see, then, we can finally agree on very little. But you know, Sir Winston, though we never spoke to one another in all our lives, I believe there was between us, through our life and work, the greatest dialogue of our time.

CHURCHILL: On that we can agree.

This text is also available on the PPU's website as well as other material about Gandhi. The PPU library has a wide selection of books about Gandhi which Peace Matters readers are welcome to visit.



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