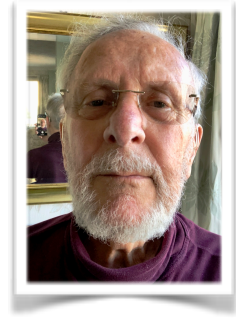


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Dirige veritas me

Conflict—Do We *Need* It?

Do we aggressive Apes *need* Conflict to thrive?

Watching the news from Ukraine every day. Horrifying. Depressing. Brutal. Bestial. Yet those beleaguered folk set a fine example of humanity at its best. They're not happy. But they *are* proud, defiant, brave, cooperative, determined, empathetic... And, who could hear that beautiful little girl sing the song from Frozen and remain unmoved...

Then there is the remarkable generosity and open-heartedness of people in the rest of Europe, opening their homes to shelter the refugees, women, children and the old...

But that's not the only thing that struck me when thinking about it all. No, something unexpected flashed into my mind (sic)—well, it startled *me!*

Suddenly, all the WOKE, TRANSPHOBIA, EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY, LGBTQ+, NON-BINARY, PC, CANCEL CULTURE stuff—with which we are buffeted every day by the scurrilous media—seemed—*IRRELEVANT!* Does any of that stuff have relevance, or even *significance*, for the people of the Ukraine? Would they give a jot? Well, what do you think? No, *really think about it...* Of course they wouldn't...

Do we, empathetic onlookers, see that stuff as relevant to them—or *even relevant to us* when we see what is going on in Ukraine, in Russia, and potentially spreading in our direction?

Be honest... We really don't...life's too short!

War also reveals its grimmer side, with death, destruction, torture, rape and pillage. Even genocide. Not good. Yet, still...maybe the very *worst* in some, brings out the very *best* in others...Maybe that's how we humans are. We are known for our aggression. Ask any psychiatrist. It's built-in. We can be assertive, angry, violent, back to relaxed—all in a few seconds.

It can be traced back to our origins as a species in Africa—so the tracers would have us believe... *Homo sapiens*: a tailless monkey, a naked ape, living in trees, then on the ground, initially in E. Africa... Surrounded by dangerous animals—insects, spiders, snakes, large grazing herds, big cats, rhino, elephant...

...And the most dangerous of all? *Other humans!* Out to steal your women. Kill your men. Purloin your food... Best to band together into self-sufficient groups for hunting, protection-while-gathering, self-defence. Best to build portable encampments, defensible against marauders—of all kinds.

And live in nuclear family groups within encampments. Why? Because we humans are individually fragile: not the biggest, strongest, fastest, or most dangerous creature on the Serengeti... And, we are monogamous—one man and one woman together to procreate; to protect, provide for, cherish, encourage, teach and, before too long, provide copious replacements for ourselves, so that we become eternal through our progeny... But, an individual family group is not survivable, on its own, in such a dangerous, constantly changing environment... with its ever-present risks, threats and conflicts.

Rather than evolve as individuals, then, we evolved socially in collections of family groups. Marriage? *Instinctive pair bonding!* Historically, harks back to before the ancient Egyptians, apparently. At least 5,000+ years. Public display of commitment. One Man, One Woman. To mark a social boundary around the family domain. Within which, to make children. Yet, within the collective, the womenfolk associate for gathering, perhaps protected by the old and infirm men. And the menfolk associate for hunting, (and, uh, raiding?) and for gathering the rare, unusual and prized—honey, eggs, grubs, deep roots, simians, etc.

Any room in this less-than-idyllic picture of early, endangered, human existence for *Weird Social Phenomena* (WSPs) such as WOKE, TRANSPHOBIA, NON-BINARY, LGBTQ+, EQUALITY, PC or whatever? *No*, too busy thriving and surviving...

So, why do we need them today? Short answer? *We don't*. Then why have we got them? Ah...not so obvious, and *we may not like the answer*.

We can see why the Ukrainians would have no interest in such Weird Social Phenomena (WSP)—(yes! they are weird—ask your grandparents. Read a history book: people have been around for c.2 million years without them—absolutely no need!)

The Ukrainians are absorbed in conflict, fighting to survive individually, as families and as a nation. If you are able, cast your mind back to WWII, and you will find that we in the West were also far too absorbed in conflict and survival, courtesy of the Nazis, to have any interest in WSPs.

Further, we had little or no interest in WSPs *after* WWII. (Also true—ask your parents.) Too busy repairing, rebuilding, resuming careers, forging new careers, re-forming families, having children (*baby-boomers*—happens after every war, apparently), and, besides, our apparent human obsession with conflict & violence had been satiated—*for the time being*... Those were exciting, creative times, even with food rationing, Lease-Lend and Rock & Roll...

And then there was the Russian Bear. Doing its best to maintain Conflict levels, post WWII. The Berlin blockade. The Berlin Wall. The Iron Curtain. The

Cold War, with its constant threat of imminent nuclear annihilation, and Mutually-Assured-Destruction, no less. And we lived with the 3-minute warning—all the time you would have to get into a doubtful nuclear shelter...Until, in 1989, down came the Wall, and the supposed end of the Cold War...only, we Cold War veterans didn't believe it. And, as it turns out...

Then, slowly at first, along with Peace, came the Weird Social Phenomena (WSPs). I needn't catalogue them in sequence... Until, today, we have a confused & confusing national counter-culture, with all of the WSPs, and more coming, on full display. And the younger people, quite weirdly *accepting* it all as both normal and reasonable: a man *can* marry a man—after all, it's the law, so it must be right. Besides, that's equality!

But, for a moment, take a look again at those slogan-WSPs:

- WOKE, "alert to racial prejudice and discrimination;" bound up with Black Lives Matter and with retribution for the ills done to the black man some 400 years ago. So, tension, smouldering resentment and the potential for *serious* conflict, already happening in the major cities.

- TRANSPHOBIA, i.e., “name calling” of people who, allegedly, have fear of, or aversion to, Trans people, or a man changing into a woman, or to transitional states, somewhere between male and female (there are, apparently, 70+ so-called genders, to date). Tempers run hot over this one. So, potential for “rock-filled handbags at dawn” conflict...
- EQUALITY, which seeks to make men and women equal, legalises same sex marriage (requiring billions of dictionaries throughout the world to be changed), and gives equal opportunity to all, in everything...so—*great* potential for tension and conflict:
 - Notably between women, who have taken up boxing, rugby or soccer, presumably to relieve their aggressive instincts? (Well, that seems to be why men take up such sports, although men can blame it on their testosterone.)
 - Ultimately between man and woman who are fundamentally *complementary, never* equal— else humanity would have died out long ago...
 - Oh! And *misandry*...which may be thinly disguised as *feminism-seeking-superiority*.

- Funny, you never hear the term *misandry* being bandied about—only *misogyny*...and then inappropriately: now, why might *that* be...?
- POLITICAL CORRECTNESS, PC, which effectively removes the right to free speech, and gives bigots the right to call out anyone who, in their opinion, says or does anything that might conceivably offend their delicate sensibilities... so, great potential for, and arisings of, tension and conflict, including...
- CANCEL CULTURE, in which entertainers, comedians, satirists, etc., performers of all kinds, have had their engagements cancelled at the behest of someone who has chosen to feel offended. So, potential too for conflict, and there already has been plenty.

I could go on—and *on*, but you get the point. And, mercifully, we haven't even discussed Health & Safety. With such an extended Peace since the end of the Cold War, society seemed, unconsciously, to long for Conflict (sic), so it started inventing successive, controversial WSPs with which to promote conflict. (Newspapers have been promoting scan-

dal, controversy & conflict for generations—after all, it’s the guaranteed way to sell newspapers!)

And successive governments, who should have known better, went along with the nonsense, and passed laws encouraging such inhuman practices. Including Political Correctness, which is against our most fundamental right of free speech, guaranteed—or so we thought—under the Magna Carta. *Are we going to have to take up arms to restore that right? Why not? Nothing like a bit of REAL conflict... (Wow! You’ve even got me at it, now...behave!)*

So, it emerges. Although just about everyone would insist that “all they ever want is Peace,” the evidence of history and of actually *having* Peace, is quite to the contrary: Humanity’s *natural, longed-for state* seems to be one of ***Conflict***. Conflict brings out the best in people, as well as the worst. And real conflict shows up those WSPs as *irrelevant social froth*.

But, how can we restore the conflict that society apparently needs, yet avoid the worst that emerges, especially, in full-blown warfare? You might expect Parliament to set an example. After all, as every aspiring young politician knows, the

Front Benches are separated by two sword lengths, to avoid pre-emptive attacks by either side.

A woman on one side, a grandmother to boot, displays long red hair and even longer legs. Why not? She's a woman, and women dress to impress—human nature! But, if a man from the benches opposite should discreetly acknowledge her, he is accused of “misogyny”—*dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women*. (These politicians clearly do not understand the *meaning* of misogyny—or of so very many of the slogans they throw about willy-nilly—worrying, when they are our law-makers...) So, even discreet acknowledgement by a man of a striking woman—which any normal, *reasonable* person might regard as both understandable and quietly *amusing*—can be distorted into *disgraceful behaviour* and *conflict!*

No, parliament is not the answer—they gave us too many of the WSPs in the first place!

Perhaps we should invoke a form of civil war instead. North vs. South? Nah! That's been done. Lancashire vs. Yorkshire? Revised War of the Roses? Nah! That would inevitably bring out the worst in people—it did before...

Racking my brains... Difficult one. How can we exploit humanity's need for CONFLICT to, somehow, benefit Humanity worldwide?

What we need is something that brings out the best, but without the very worst happening too. And wouldn't it be good if it was on a planet-wide scale, such that the conflict, say, improved the environment. How about, *we sequester all fossil fuel reserves worldwide, including gas, oil, coal. That will surely involve CONFLICT!*

How could this be set up? Well, one way would be for *each hemisphere* somehow to identify, nominate and then *physically sequester* fossil fuel reserves “on the ground,” in the *other* hemisphere. This would, presumably, be arranged under the auspices of the UN, such that the each hemispheres could synchronise their respective “shut-downs” in their opposing hemisphere...

Such activity would undoubtedly cause hardship in the locale surrounding each shutdown site. And that hardship would be a necessary price to be paid, else there would be no “conflict downside,” and no opportunity for humanity to come to the aid of their unfortunate neighbours.

Unacceptable? Let's face up to it—there is no way in which this necessary exercise, ridding ourselves of fossil fuel energy, can avoid being painful—else we are going to *destroy the planet*. Nations are currently so concerned with their economies out-performing the competition that they are stoking up a storm of greenhouse gases—quite the opposite of what the world needs...some serious intervention is needed to set things straight. And soon. Very soon. Like, right NOW!

Using this strategy, the conflict resolves into 'chess,' where each side has the same opportunity to attack, and to defend, as the other. Like chess, the rules will have to be carefully worked out, to avoid cheating. But, importantly, the game ends with no active fossil fuel energy resources on either side—*so the Planet wins...if we play the game in time*.

What Arrant Nonsense!

Would never work—no-one would ever agree to it

Don't be too sure.

It's a conceivable approach where,

otherwise,

there seems to be nothing but...

... the Tragedy of the Commons writ large...

