

a routine by governments in another country, being internal affairs. This is more than an ethical problem. As a society could not exist without a moral convention among its members, so countries cannot exist, side by side in peace, without a moral code. I am deeply convinced that this is the simple root of all our political troubles, the whole political superstructure being but a "pseudo-problem".

There is but one moral code, and, if any government rejects it inside its borders, it will reject it in its international relations as well, and create disorder. The question is whether any deviation from moral convention should be suffered by the rest of mankind. There are international laws to control pestilence, for fear that that pestilence may spread across borders. Why not the same for moral pestilence?

For most of my colleagues, these questions may seem crude and the answers so self-evident, that discussion of them is superfluous. But, political questions can come into the scientists' life also in subtler forms, making decisions more difficult. When they do, each will have to answer these questions for himself, to avoid being made into tools for purposes with which he may not agree. It may perhaps be more useful here to call attention to three psychological factors that may make the choice difficult and obscure the issue unless we have recognised them.

The first of these can be summed up by the saying, "Things are not as we see them, but we are as we see things." An honest man will think the world honest; a dishonest man, or government, will think that the rest of the world is made of criminals or warmongers. This is natural. We really know only our own mental machine, and are likely to suppose that it represents the mental machine of man. So, if honest people hear and read about crimes committed in other countries, they just do not believe it, or may believe it with their minds only, not with their hearts.

Another peculiarity of the mind is that man likes to commit his crimes and gratify his animal instincts, or craving for power, in the name of high-sounding principles. So, we cook up such principles and appoint ourselves their defenders. Men of goodwill thus are sidetracked, giving their honest consideration to the principles, instead of to the crimes. Even good ends do not justify bad means, so I keep myself to the advice, "Watch deeds, not words." In politics, I observe "acts" and lend a deaf ear to "principles" until my moral standards have been satisfied by the former.

My third, and last remark concerns the fact that the brain is not an organ of thinking, but an organ of survival, like claws and fangs. It is made in such a way as to make us accept as truth which might only be an advantage. It is an exceptional, almost pathological, constitution one has if one follows thoughts logically through, regardless of consequences. Such people make martyrs, apostles, or scientists, and mostly end on the stake or in a chair, electric or academic.

Another difficulty may lie in the fact that moral laws are not always unequivocal. If morals are the rules which make living together possible, then they may change according to the conditions under which we have to live together. Bigamy is regarded as a crime in one country, while in another it may be the rule for any self-respecting gentleman. Even the most basic rule, "Thou shalt not kill", may change from time to time. At the dawn of mankind it might have read, "Thou shalt not kill inhabitants of your own cave." Politicians would like to keep it at this level.

So, what is really needed is an international "bureau of moral standards", passing out "weights and measures". If these were generally enforced or accepted, we would march toward a more hopeful future and would not have to find consolation in the fact that, after all, our globe is but a second-rate planet and so its blowing up does not really matter.

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