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## **War and Rationality**

Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see". And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine." When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

The Book of the Revelation of John the Apostle 6:1-11

It is hard to find any another social circumstance that so sharply retouches old and inescapably brings about new *dilemmas*, personal and collective, as does war. In opposition to that, war unequivocally asserts the *roles* and forces individuals and collectives to take them on. This is why many people are capable of crushing the horns of difficult war dilemmas, and function in a state of war, as well as think about it clearly and distinctly. If that is functional or even functionally necessary among those who *decide* and (among those who) *participate* in war – it is, maybe, unusual that many who *interpret* war act like that too. At the same time, most often there is no attempt to *understand* war, it is either *justified* or *condemned*. Those who justify it, and it is always a *concrete war* that is being justified, usually refrain from reinterpreting their positions by *universalizing* them. Those who condemn war most often use universal arguments as support and therefore condemn war as war, war in general, overlooking the fact that there is no *war in general*. However, by that we simultaneously overlook the death of concrete people in war, that the horrible suffering and annihilation of

human dignity is directly affecting real people. As well, lessons are also given out of secure lives and haughtiness to those who directly participate and die in war. And while those close to us die right beside us it would be, at very least, decent if we who lead secure lives feel shame precisely because of that security. Both those who “condemn” and those who “justify” war should agree that the demand for the universalization of our positions and the awareness of the concreteness of practical acts must be acknowledged: in the field of ethics and politics as it is from the time of Aristotle. Dilemmas that hinder our inclination to nonchalantly, and easily from out of our bathrobes make choices regarding the life and death of others result precisely from the practical ethical-political problems arising from the attempt to bridge this gap between universality and concreteness. What follows is an expression of such *dilemmas*. And something more.

### Natural Rationality

When it is colloquially said that war is an absence of peace and peace an ending of war, it is actually admitted that “war” and “peace” are hard to define; and not only that. By that it is claimed that war and peace are clearly mutually distinguished, that “there is no middle ground between war and peace”, as Cicero once said a long time ago (*Philippica* 8.1: *Inter bellum et pacem nihil est medium.*). Therefore: *either war or peace, nothing in between!* Such a position is accepted by Hugo de Groot as well (Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*, 1625). – However, when does war end and peace begin? Are war preparations also war or still just peace? What does differentiate war and peace at all? If a commercial war, a barrier’s war, a cold war, or a media war exist – then is peace still the absence of war? Are blockades and sanctions, as the regular and favorite means of diplomacy of power and force, already some sort of war or still just peace? Or maybe unpunished killing does mean that war is at hand? However, do we not live in a world which has made killing mediated, which has alienated and concealed the link between those who decide on human fates and those who perish?

In Plato’s dialogue *Laws* (626a), he says: “That which most people call peace is just a name (an empty word), in fact all states are by their nature in a constant state of undeclared war against all other states.” Therefore, not only are all states in a constant war against all other states, but that is the *natural state*: states are at war by their nature, *kata physin*, essentially – states exist on that basis. And seeing how the state (*polis*) is a public and legal community of people-citizens, that then means that people *are by their nature* found in a constant war with other people. *War is a natural state*. That is exactly what is intended by

Hobbes' renowned motto *bellum onium contra omnes*: the war of all against all is the natural state.

The state of pure naturality is *a state of instincts and drives*. That is a state that belongs to the biological sphere and as such it is outside of the sphere of morality. Of course, not even the actions taken in such a state can escape moral evaluation.

The state of pure naturality is simultaneously also a state of *pure rationality* (an ethically neutral capability of adaptation with the goal of survival and domination), rationality as a pure form applicable and effective in any content. That content is not necessarily just science or philosophy, but also myth, play, and even *war*.

*War is a state of pure naturality*, a state of instincts and drives. And because rationality – and particularly goal-directed, instrumental, utilitarian, functional rationality – is pure naturality, then: *war is a state of pure (natural) rationality*. One side of this problem could be called *rational violence* and the other *violent rationality*.

### War as Rational Violence

It is obvious that there exist rational forms within which war becomes extremely functionalized and highly sophisticated. **Technical rationality** (“goal-means” rationality) has its highest expression in *war technique* and *military industry*. And in general **material-scientific rationality** (care for the rise of scientific knowledge) is increasingly under the influence of military research, which has become the incentive for scientific discoveries: the perversion is therefore in that military *applicative* science now determines *fundamental* science and not the opposite. Scientific technological progress is definitively linked to the military industry and militarism: that is hidden in the expression “the military-industrial complex”. Nor are the so-called humanities without that complex today. With that, **economic rationality** has long had its own adaptation in war economics. And **instrumental (goal-directed) rationality** is apparent in the fact that war is a rationally chosen instrument for achieving political goals: every war has a very precise *goal*. This was best expressed by that Prussian officer, Carl von Clausewitz, in his conspicuous sentence: “Der Krieg ist eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln” (“War is a mere continuation of politics by other means”).<sup>1</sup> Emphasizing that war should be observed in the context of the whole social life,

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<sup>1</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege* (1831), Bonn 1980.

Clausewitz founded social theory *sub specie belli*.<sup>2</sup> Neither is Hegel any further from Clausewitz, not only because death was the mere continuation of the same 1831 cholera epidemic for both. For him war is the driver of the self-regulation of society.<sup>3</sup> That actually means that war is placed within the confines of so-called **systemic rationality**. And when it comes to the issue of **argumentative and communicative rationality** then we are unfortunately witnesses to how deliberate and functionalized is the *media's* packaging of the propaganda war and war propaganda.

*The media are the war infrastructure.* The media myth of “the clean war” has become the constitutive part of the skill of war: the media truth of war and the very skill of war are also established in *deceit, illusion*. The media attractiveness of war is a newer phenomenon just in the technical sense. The most brutal killing of people for media use was practiced from the times of Roman gladiator battles up to the Sarajevo street massacres. The media-mediated violence is imposed on the so-called “public” with an already interpreted meaning and is goal-rationally utilized for the “production of socially-acceptable truth” (according to the phrase of Christopher Norris<sup>4</sup>), for the shaping of so-called “public opinion” which should confirm and reinforce positions acceptable for the political power center, in order to afford those positions legitimacy. Decisions are supposedly made under pressure from public opinion, yet in actuality public opinion has already been shaped under pressure from the media. The so-called “free public” becomes a tool of opinion control and soul manipulation.<sup>5</sup> That’s why in the Gulf War, the American military authorities (that being the state) decided that the media should be supervised *all the time*.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the war that is in the media multiple mediated is offered as a non-mediated insight into the thing itself, as a pure experience of reality, whereas it is in fact a mirror of state (that is military-industrial) interests.

(From the darkness of Communist despotism in the “East” we did not even dare look at the glittering media totalitarianism in the “West”.)

*War produces a new communicative community*, it installs a new instance of linguistic competency. War introduces a new criterion for differentiating a “maternal” from a “foreign” language, which also occurs when warring sides factually belong to the same linguistic

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<sup>2</sup> The interest for this problem is now renewed by multidisciplinary contributions in: G. Vowinckel, Hg., *Clausewitz-Kolloquium: Theorie des Krieges als Sozialwissenschaft*, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 1993.

<sup>3</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse*, Berlin 1821, §§ 321-340

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Norris, *Uncritical Theory: Postmodernism, Intellectuals and the Gulf War*, Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press 1992, p. 129-130.

<sup>5</sup> For the newest actualization of the problem see the following journals: *Die Neue Gesellschaft: Frankfurter Hefte* 39 (9/1992) p. 780-815: “Medien und Macht”; *Merkur* 47 Nr. 534/535 (9-10/1993) p. 745-924: “Medien. Neu? Über Macht, Ästhetik, Fernsehen”.

<sup>6</sup> On this Pentagon “policy of media supervision” see John R. MacArthur, *Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the Gulf War*, New York: Hill and Wang 1992.

community. Of course, much more than participation in the same linguistic community is necessary for understanding and agreement. The roles that war outlines and ultimately defines are forced to speak the rhetoric that dismisses a *universally* understood communicative community. (A community can be communicative in essence because it is at least potentially universal, simply because of the inter-subjectivity and transparency of language.) However, even when we reject the communicative community we still must communicate – not unusually even forcefully: thus a *communicative community of force* is created: War becomes a type of communication.

### Violent Rationality

As we have already said, *war is a state of pure (natural) rationality*. Also, other than war violence being rational, rationality itself is violent at the same time. There can therefore not be discussion only of the *rational form of war*, but we must also talk about how rationality itself as pure naturality contains violence in it. – Let us carefully listen to Clausewitz once more: War as an instrument of politics is “Akt der Gewalt, um den Gegner zur Erfüllung unseres Willens zu zwingen” (“an act of violence to force the opponent *to a fulfilment of our will*”). With that let us keep in mind something that Sun Tzu says (*Ping-fa* I 17): “*The whole skill of war is based on deception.*”<sup>7</sup> Violence against the other, the breaking of his autonomous will, and *deception* and cheating are in the foundations of war. But I wish to stress that coercion with the goal of imposing one’s will and deception are both immanent in natural rationality itself!

Two hermeneutic excursions from the history of this problem will lead us to the birthplace of European rationality. – European rationality was founded by the Hellenes, in their idea of the *logos*. Of course this word is first used in Homer’s *Odyssey* (1.56) linked to the lonely yet love-desiring nymph Calypso, who, in order to keep Odysseus for herself on her island of Ogygia, addresses him *haimylioisi logoisi* (αἰμυλίοισι λόγοισι) – with cunning, misleading, deceptive, flattering, and seductive words. Deception and seduction – precisely those – are the essential characteristics of *logos*. In its early use, *logos* is the *word* whose meaning is determined subjectively and with a clearly defined *goal*. *Logos* is a contrived and persuasive word. *Logos* thence implies *proof*. One’s will is imposed by *force of arguments*, the deception is logically legalized so to speak. – And all of that is happening in Europe. And Europe was a beautiful and virtuous royal daughter. The ideal opportunity. That was an

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<sup>7</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1963. (There are many English editions.)

irresistible provocation for Zeus, who led the virgin Europe to some cave *by treachery* and raped her. The gallant seducer Zeus in turn compensated Europe's harm bestowing her two-fold: with expensive jewelry and a spear that always strikes its target. The expensive jewelry was supposed to return the attraction lost along with virginity. The disturbed cosmos is brought to order through cosmetics. For complete deceit, financial power is also necessary, and it is also vouched for by expensive jewelry. And where there is power there is force: the spear that always strikes its target (therefore the paradigm of perfect goal-oriented, instrumental rationality) – that is military force with *logistical* support, that is the metaphor of *violent rationality*.

### *Post hoc ergo ante hoc*

The history of the Europe mentioned is a *history of wars, a history of violence and deceit*. Both the mythical and the geographically-historical Europe is determined by violence. Europe decided that history would be a history of wars. We are told so before all by the teacher of all Hellenes and subsequently of all Europeans – Homer. Heraclitus also speaks of that (fr. 53): “War is father of all, king of all; and some he manifested as gods and some as men, some he made slaves and some free.” – Why is history a history of wars? Michel Foucault points out that *the discourse of historians* has for a long time been affiliated with the *ritual of power*.<sup>8</sup> Thence Foucault derives the traditional function of history: (1) it tells the story of the powerful, and thereby also *legally binds people to power*: history is the discourse of *the power establishing the order*; (2) it is the fascination with the glory of exemplary people and actions. The *light of law* and the *brilliance of glory* are functional principles of history. Law and glory result from power, and power results from war. For a long time society has been organized and structured around the idea of *war being the actuator of history* (Georges Bataille). War is thus a “fundamental institution of the state similar to law” (*Fundamentalinstitution des Staates wie das Gesetz*), as Adolf Lasson said.<sup>9</sup> Not only does order originate from war, but then war results from the structure and nature of the state itself: “to always be ready for war” – that is the regulative principle of the contemporary state.

*History is a great rationalization of war.* “Goal-means” rationality is characteristic both for war and history: war and history alike are by their essence instrumentalized. Therefore history is always a *teleologization*. This teleologization is two-directional, it is also turned

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<sup>8</sup> See for instance Michel Foucault, *Vom Licht des Krieges zur Geburt der Geschichte*, Berlin 1986.

<sup>9</sup> Adolf Lasson, *Das Kulturideal und der Krieg*, Berlin 1868.

backwards: history is the search for sources of previously determined goals: the consequence precedes the cause, and for that to be concealed history tells us the story of events in chronological perspective. The glove turned inside-out is thrown!

*History is thus a great causalization of war.* History is the production and sale of the *causes of war*. “Causes” created by interests and elaborated by history are projected into real happenings. Thus a *simulation of war* is created with the goal of it becoming a *real war*. Of course that historical causality is teleological<sup>10</sup> and that, strictly speaking, war as such *has no causes* in the sense of natural necessity and causal-consequential determinism or even fatalism. Not only because then the field of liberty would be slashed. Every war *can be* avoided; war *does not have* to happen... But wars happen (to us), do they not? If you do not believe your own eyes ask a historian, because he’s wearing glasses.

### *Bellum justum?*

However, the question of the causes of war has one completely other meaning also: from the causes and reasons of war the *right to war (ius ad bellum)*, war needs to be derived, the right to wage war: war wants to be *legalized*. The arbitrary causalization of war is its legalization that regularly occurs from the position of force, before it is recorded in the registry of history. In order to agree peacefully to force, the causalization of war is wedded to its moralization: that is, the right to war (*ius ad bellum*) will not be just a question of war (*warfare law: ius belli* or *ius in bello*) but rather wants to also have a *moral* sense: so it is decided that *there exists a just war (bellum justum)*, therefore a morally cloaked right to the unpunished killing of people exists. The aforementioned Hugo de Groot was the first to offer an explicit formulation: war can be made only to safeguard the law and must be conducted within the confines of the law. If in Clausewitz’s position that war only begins with *defence*, we see more than just a problem of war tactics and strategy, then a formulation of a just war is found within that position. But what is defence and when does it begin? Who is the decisive judge of that? What of the popular cover “offence is the best defence”? It does not even suffice to say that war is just when the principles justifying it are undisputable, as Habermas thinks.<sup>11</sup> Which instance decides if some principle is undisputable and that the issue at hand is the very defence of that principle? Does an instance of force decide on the principle that justifies

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<sup>10</sup> On that see Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Kausalität in der Geschichte?” (1964), in: Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 4: Neuere Philosophie II, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1987, p. 107-116.

<sup>11</sup> Jürgen Habermas, “Wider die Logik des Krieges: Ein Plädoyer für Zurückhaltung aber nicht gegenüber Israel”, *Die Zeit* (15 February 1991) p. 40.

force? The position that war is justified in the case of the exhaustion of all the non-martial means of eliminating the reason for war (as Tugendhat argues<sup>12</sup>) does not fair any better. The problem is both in the causalization and in the decision-making instance. And Tugendhat's other principle, that evils accompanying war must be less than the evil needed to be eliminated by war, is faced with a similar objection. That which is presented here as *law* shows itself to be *violence*. "If the law of the stronger becomes a political relation, that does not signify the transition from violence to law, but from a power that is directly exerted to a power that calculates", is Glucksmann's warning, which it seems he himself did not hear at all.<sup>13</sup>

The causalization of war makes much more sense when it asks the question of *the responsibility for war*. And the responsibility for war is always ascertained following the war, and by *deducing it from the results of war*. The epilogue of the war is projected into the causes of the war: the culprit of the war is always the defeated, the defeated is responsible for the war. The victor has never been responsible for the war thus far, victors were never judged for war crimes. Responsibility decided in the sphere of military power does not allow for the question of *the legal and moral responsibility for the manner of the concrete behavior of war participants* to be considered outside of the scope of force. Despite that, this question *must* always be asked.

The question of the concrete responsibility of the participants in the Yugoslav civil war were previously decided outside of the sphere of law and morality: since the causalization of the war from the perspective of force determined that the Serbs were responsible for the war, then it would seem natural that the Serbs be defeated and accused of war crimes. The uniformly forced media matrix satanization of the Serbs distinctively demonstrates *the social function of the scapegoat* as a projected and externalized *animality*. In this context, Serbs only have the right to a sacrifice and suffering functionalized for the establishing of unity, and the imposition of the interests of power, of course.<sup>14</sup> The clearly weaker is satanized in order to be hated without danger, and for this hatred to have a moral cover – the scapegoat is excommunicated from the sphere of morality, he is the "completely other": Serbs are presented by the media as the *Untermenschen*, which are a danger for the civilized world. The satanization of the Serbs as *animalization of the human* marks, symbolically and really, the placing of Serbs outside of all laws of justice and nature, which should be observed in contrast to the *humanization of the animal*, namely the "humanitarian" (!) activity of societies for the

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<sup>12</sup> Ernst Tugendhat, "Der Golfkrieg, Deutschland und Israel", *Die Zeit* (22 February 1991) p. 61-62.

<sup>13</sup> André Glucksmann, *Le Discours de la guerre* (1967), Paris: Bernard Grasset 1979, p. 104.

<sup>14</sup> On that see the valuable and interesting article written by Raško Radović, "Logika mržnje: Morfopsihologija satanizacije", *Dialogue* 1 № 4 (Paris, décembre 1992) p. 45-60.

protection of animals with the goal of disassociating animals from natural laws (to which they utterly belong) as much as possible and their subsuming under legal norms. The victim has no rights, except to be a victim in a forcefully legitimized ritual of world power, whose sanctity (*interest in fact!*) it must not bother.

Such a context is an extraordinary occasion for the reassignment of history, for its before all emotional and then also “factual” reinterpretation. The Nazi war crimes against the Serbs (“a hundred for one!”) receive an unexpected opportunity for redemption: because Serbs are criminals, those who killed them cannot be criminals. The much hoped for chance is hurriedly used: *the return to the scene of the crime* has a purifying function. In order for this perversion to be perfect the collective trial of the Serbs for war crimes should be held in Jasenovac concentration camp [for the organized genocide against Serbs, Jews, and Roma by the satellite fascist Independent State of Croatia during World War II] – the Serbian Auschwitz. That might be the “final solution” (*Endlösung*). “*The Jews*” are nowadays called Serbs.

Let us come back to the question: Is there a just war? The answer to this question is the *factual* reflection of the relation of powers onto the plane of morality. It is necessary to conceal what Plato does not wish to hide. A few lines following the previously cited quote from Plato’s *Laws* (626b) the following is said: “Nothing can be of use to us if we do not achieve dominance in war. Because he who is defeated – all of his possessions will pass into the hands of the victor.” The question of the existence of a just war conceals the fact that wars usually end with someone being defeated and someone being victorious. John Locke’s attractive thought that war cannot be overcome by peace but rather by *justice*<sup>15</sup> could become true if justice would be decided outside of the sphere of power. The need for a *just solution* to eliminate the causes of war is natural for a community for which war represents a moral and existential problem, particularly for a community the integrity of which is problematized. However, something quite different is happening. “The causes” of war are the *calculations of war*, that is interest secured by force. That is why the truth of war is in fact the relation of power. Truth is a surplus of force, says Michel Foucault in his aforementioned text. He points out that the historical-political discourse sees truth and law in the relation of powers, and the subject that speaks of law and searches for truth is excluded out of philosophical-legal universality; camp appurtenance enables the deciphering of truth: *The discourse of war and history is biased discourse*. For Foucault it is not about history being judged according to

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<sup>15</sup> See John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (London 1690), A critical edition with an Introduction and *apparatus criticus* by Peter Laslett, Cambridge: At the University Press 1960: *The Second Treatise of Government* III 20; compare Immanuel Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden: Ein philosophischer Entwurf* I 1 (Königsberg 1795), *Gesammelte Schriften* (Akademie-Ausgabe), Bd. VIII, Berlin 1912, p. 343-344.

some ideal scheme, a natural law or God's will; the order and institutions are "laws of dried up blood" behind which lie forgotten victories and defeats.

## Pacifism

How can we escape the relativism of this position? May the question of war justice and truth be formulated perhaps as follows: Which *values* are being defended or attacked by war? This question burdens us with the problem of value relativism and absolutism. The dispute is so burdensome that at this occasion I must unload it at once. But we will all agree that *human life* is an inviolable value. Now the problem may be observed thus: Does man have a *right* to kill another man? Is the commandment "Thou shall not kill!" valid in all circumstances and from all perspectives? Does this value have *absolute* validity? – An affirmative answer to this question is contained in the position of *pacifism*. The position of pacifism is generally possible and consequential only if it aspires to an absolute validity. Relativism denies pacifism. Every moral evaluation demands universalization. The position of pacifism might be formulated as such: violence should not be opposed with violence, not even in cases of defense or punishment. Or: A man must not, under any circumstances, kill another man, regardless of the good that might derive from it or the evil that might be prevented.<sup>16</sup>

Let us now set aside the fact that a pacifist could hardly list anything in support of his position considerably influencing the outcome of war or, say, the elimination of its causes. Let us also postpone the story in which pacifism would be a therapy of self-releasing from responsibility, a nirvana in the middle of war; and not only that: "pacifism can be one of the weapons of an aggressive war"<sup>17</sup>. Let us keep the problem in a theoretical field, namely: Can a pacifist demand a universal validity for his position, that his position be absolutely valid? I think that he cannot: I, of course, *have a right* to not oppose the breaking of my rights, but *I do not have a right* to make a universal law out of that right of mine. Would the following formulation then be valid: only pacifists are *required* to observe pacifism. This circularity brings into question the very principle of pacifism and its definability: pacifism is what pacifists observe, and pacifists are those who observe pacifism. The position of pacifism can however be plausible if we understand it as a *moral requirement* that while war lasts we worry about the elimination of the causes of war. But, moral requirements cannot be linked to

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<sup>16</sup> Compare Thomas Nagel, *Mortal Questions*, Cambridge: CUP 1979, reprinted 1990, p. 53-74: "War and Massacre" (1972), especially p. 56.

<sup>17</sup> Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, II: *The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath*, London: Routledge 1945, <sup>5</sup>1966 (1995), p. 244.

some particular group of people. Peace has always been a general political and ethical ideal, and the *striving for peace is linked not only to pacifism*. Nor do pacifists themselves have a right to exclusively reserve the privilege of striving for peace; and especially not to behave, with a feeling of excess of competencies, as to curtail the rights of those who truly suffer in war to be against war. The other extreme, which I do not wish to suggest, is that the striving for peace is a rhetorical problem, so that we can say that people decide in favor of war in order to gain peace, as says Aristotle (*Politics* VII 14. 1333<sup>a</sup> 35; 15. 1334<sup>a</sup> 15). But if we listen to Popper then the meaning of this sentence of Aristotle's will be clear to us: a rational position as well as tolerance have *limits*, so the position that everything should be tolerated cannot be accepted, because we then agree to nullify the position of tolerance; namely, there is no argument that would force people to hear an argument, and one cannot argue with a lover of violence because he would answer to an argument with a bullet if we do not hold him under control with a threat of counter-violence. Popper's motivation is clear: he would rather *abolish concrete evils* than *realize abstract good things*, it is not happiness but human suffering that is the most urgent problem of public policy rationale, because *suffering and evil are always concrete*.<sup>18</sup>

If pacifism is not one of the media-profiled roles in a deceiving war carnival, if such striving for peace does not play a role in the war director's propaganda scene, if..., then pacifism is important because it represents *an opposition to war as a natural state*: pacifism is then an attempt to oppose the state of pure naturality (state of instincts and drives) and the natural rationality (rational violence and violent rationality) characteristic for war. Then pacifism seeks to maintain those principles of morality that war nullifies. Of course, it is not only pacifism that does so.

## First Philosophy: Ethics and Politics

If war is a state of pure animal naturality and functionalized violent rationality, then "*the state of war suspends morality*", as Emmanuel Levinas says; *war mocks morality*. Levinas' insight is a memento against forgetting that war violence is not contained so much in wounding and destroying as much as in *the interruption of the continuity of personhood*.<sup>19</sup> That interruption is actually a break with eternity: war deprives us of our *obligation toward eternity*; but war

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<sup>18</sup> Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (1963), London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul <sup>4</sup>1972, p. 355-363: "Utopia and Violence" (1947).

<sup>19</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et infini: Essai sur l'extériorité*, La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff 1961, <sup>3</sup>1968, 5: "L'état de guerre suspend la morale...".

also imposes that obligation! War deprives us of *responsibility*; but at the same time war increases responsibility. Responsibility? That is actually the awareness of responsibility or precisely the awareness of freedom: namely the awareness regarding how we freely choose the goals that we freely follow, as Gadamer says in the aforementioned article. War brings into question the fact that man is responsible *as* free. But war brings freedom!

Pure naturality – I am coming back to the beginning in order to come to the end – is the *fateful state* that is opposed to freedom. To abandon oneself to fate – does not only mean not to be free but also to *be irresponsible*. It has been said a long time ago: “Ethos is man’s destiny” (Heraclitus, fr. 119: ἦθος ἀνθρώπων δαίμων). Responsibility is a freely chosen “destiny”. War mocks responsibility. Intellectuals cannot cause or prevent war (if someone really thinks that, he is either blind or conceited), but **intellectuals must safeguard responsibility**. For that responsibility it is sometimes enough to *understand* historical events in order for them not to occur again.

Adorno’s prohibition of writing poetry after “Auschwitz” here also has a deeper meaning. “Auschwitz” is of course a metaphor and not just the Germanized name for a Polish locality (Oświęcim). Is philosophical reflection possible after “Auschwitz” or “Jasenovac” – that metaphor of ours also immortalized by death? NO – if the first philosophy is Aristotle’s metaphysics, which considers being as a being. YES – if *ethics and politics* are the first philosophy, if instead of an impersonal being we reflect on the being of the person, on its liberty and responsibility.

To think responsibly and feel responsibility, that is the precondition for a serious discussion on the civil war in Yugoslavia. That discussion has yet to begin. Such a discussion is not led out of obligations required by grabbed roles, but rather out of an internal need and sense of responsibility. Furthermore, our different convictions and our different traditions do not prevent dialogue, so we should not eliminate them in order to communicate. On the contrary, every serious dialogue includes the identity of those who participate in it. On the contrary, a dialogue is a mechanical exchange of opinions. When we speak of dialogue, we must be aware that no naïve and pure scene on which dialogue is being led exists. Dialogue is led in a context in which power functions, and we here feel that on our skin. We know that the distribution of power occurs already at the level of language.<sup>20</sup> Dialogue must not be limited just to the élites that simulate it in the media space. We must be able to recognize all of that in dialogue. It would be good for dialogue to commence as soon as possible.

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<sup>20</sup> Compare for example Kurt Röttgers, “Diskursive Sinnstabilisation durch Macht”, in: Jürgen Fohrmann, Harro Müller, Hg., *Diskurstheorien und Literaturwissenschaft*, Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp 1988, p. 114-133.