

The Ethics of War and Peace. 51st Annual Conference of the Societas Ethica, Maribor, Slovenia, August, 21–24, 2014

Editors' note

This anthology comprises some of the positions presented at the 51st annual conference of Societas Ethica, the European Society for Research in Ethics. Alas, the Ethics of War and Peace is quite relevant today, perhaps more so than for a long time. It is, after all, much less clear how and why armed conflicts arise today—and how they should be terminated with a minimum of harm, devastation, and social upheaval.

Simple patterns of dichotomy and antagonism seem to apply less strongly than in traditional warfare, and the devastating effects of purges, random attacks and symbolic targeting last longer and more painfully than we might hope for. Apart from this thematic focus, to which we shall return in the preface, this note must also address a somewhat mundane, but nonetheless topical matter, relating to the academy. For as you may notice, this anthology is far from comprehensive in terms of papers and positions presented at the conference.

There are, of course, a variety of reasons for such astounding lacunae. The most substantial reason, perhaps, is the change of how results of academic enterprise are valued and deemed today. It is remarkable, after all, that academic contributions to conference reports and other fora of traditional academic exchange among peers is regarded as less rewarding, if at all, in terms of assessing what some would label »academic output«. This development is interesting in its disturbing character, raising rather fundamental questions of academic liberty and inherent standards. If the academy no longer can regard certain expressions of academic exchange as acceptable, because monographs and journal articles with high impact factor have become primary points of reference, a vital part of the academy is prone to evaporate. The value of individual research and its written cast notwithstanding, there are other forms of peer exchange finding expression e.g. in conference reports and anthologies relating to other formalised settings of academic endeavour. Crudely put, the academy is more than publishing, particularly when bearing in mind that the identification of truth — also with a capital »T« — is a common pursuit to which all parts of the academy contribute in their ways. The apparatus required for review publications (and conference abstracts) is in this regard another way of formalising the request for academic dialogue. If one were not on speaking terms with academic traditions, the danger of duplication, fallacy, and self-deception would certainly increase.

This development is further propelled by a societal demand of assessing the results of academic endeavour at short range. Universities have become deeply dependent upon continuous private or public funding, demanding that effects of previous contributions are meticulously evaluated in order to avoid slacks or downsides.

This dependence is also transmitted as a performance pressure to academics, spurring their achievements and continuous proof of relevance. While somehow convincing at first glance, equalling remuneration with the delivery of services defined, this matrix tends to fall short of the *longue durée* characterising academic efforts. Rarely, thought is an instant reflex or response, and often, intellectual discovery requires an intimacy with the fields of study not unlikely the way in which we come to unravel the nature of the other through love and friendship in the passage of time. Neither in the natural sciences, nor in humanities, quick fixes are on offer.

While this anthology might be the last expression of the traditional annual report of the *Societas Ethica*, then, it bears in itself witness to the vivacity and strength of an academic society having developed with a transforming Europe. The great divides of denominations and ideologies, once marking North and South, East and West Europe, have apparently been left behind, while other internal and external economic, political and religious agendas are about to shape Europe in remarkably different ways. The academy is subject to these developments, and it is, therefore, difficult as always to predict how academic societies will thrive in future. With decennia of knowledge, exchange, and friendship on record, it is very likely, though, that *Societas Ethica* still will form a preferred context for academic deliberation in annual meetings as well as in a variety of publications, inevitably reflecting how the academic tides will turn.

Preface

The 51st Annual Conference of the Societas Ethica investigated the »Ethics of War and Peace« – an issue which proved much more topical and acute than the board had hoped for. With no claim of covering all, a few countries with pertaining issues of warfare should be named here: Ukraine, Syria, Nigeria, Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan ...

A mere hundred years ago, World War I destroyed countries, civilizations, and millions of souls with devastating effect within four years. This centennial did not spur the decision for this topic primarily, but rather the notion that a European Society for the Research of Ethics has to face the reality of war at the gates of Europe and beyond. In recognition of respect of the rich and almost tantallising heritage of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, Maribor in Slovenia was chosen as a fit venue, bearing witness to the inter-culturality and interwoven history of this region. Moreover, with its proximity to Sarajevo, where it all seemingly began, the location brought a certain depth and existential dimension to the conference, the place itself embodying the shift of borders, populations and the redefinition of countries in the aftermath of the dreadful war in the 1990s.

The Institute Anton Martin Slomsek at Maribor thus served as the perfect conference venue for almost 70 academic from Europe, the USA, South America, Africa, and Australia.

After a thematic introduction to the topic presented by Societas Ethica's president, Göran Collste, the High Commissioner for Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Valentin Inzko*, delivered an impressive opening speech tackling the painstaking efforts for reconciliation between the different regional states.

Zorica Maros, Catholic Theological Faculty of Sarajevo, in her keynote speech focused on »From Abuse of Memory to Revenge. (Im)Possibilities of Forgiveness«, vividly demonstrating the difficulty of forgiveness over against the monstrous assaults having taken place in the so-called »Balkan War«.

Peter Wallensteen (University of Uppsala) in his keynote was interested in sketching conditions for fruitful deliberations after war which might lead closer to a state envisioned in Immanuel Kant's »Perpetual Peace«. Hence, his address was named »From War Termination to Quality Peace: Conditions for Perpetual Peace«. His lecture was carefully responded to by *Ronnie Hjorth* from the Swedish National Defense College.

As a contribution from outside Europe, a view of the other, one might say, *Siddharth Mallavarapu* (South Asian University) screened »The Responsibility to Protect: A Perspective from the Global South«, which in *Gotlind Ulshöfer* (Evangelische Akademie Frankfurt/Universität Tübingen) met an engaged and involved deliberating counterpart. The exposé of her response is found in this anthology.

In a very vivid keynote, *Nigel Biggar* (Oxford University) took a different stance: »In Defence of Just War: the Christian tradition, Controversies, and Current Cases«, arguing for war as a means of politics in the tradition of Augustine's *bellum iustum*. Not very

surprisingly, perhaps, Biggar's position was subject to a stimulating debate, in which many adhered to a more or less pacifistic mainstream. Göran Collste responded to this keynote, also presented here.

In addition to the keynotes, in eight channels chaired by members of the board, 32 papers were been presented ranging from political ethics of peace and war to anthropological questions of aggression and forgiveness. A selection of nine papers is presented in this anthology.

Peter Rožič analyses the role of passions in building society and (its) peace departing from Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. For Rožič, Tocqueville rests his notion of democracy on passions, with equality taking a paramount position among them. In order to use Tocqueville as an advocate of peace, Rožič needs to define that state and particularly the absence and rejection of war. With Martin Ceadel, he distinguishes pacifism from pacificism, pointing out that war for the latter in no way can be a site of justice, while the use of military means in order to defend the achievements of peace may be condoned. Since this state of peace is pivotal for societal development and equilibrium, Rožič uses Tocqueville's awe about the different routes common passions can take: in France, it led to revolutionary unrest and the reign of the Guillotine, in America to societal development and peace, because it focused on the private interest (one might also say: happiness) of each citizen. This interest has its immovable place in the heart, thus defining a sociology of passions and the individual seat of such passion, driven by envy in order to gain the state of well-being, which is seen as the mother of passions. In a society thus formed, war and peace are linked by honour, the two sides of enjoying and defending the society fulfilling one's most fundamental desires. In this sense, there is a dialectic at work between equality as the level having been achieved as well as the driver of development and defence. Differently put, Rožič understands equality in this perspective as an aspiration and a condition. Peace, thus, turns into a public enterprise, a result of political action of individual citizens free to hunt for the equality they desire within the a complex counterbalancing system of human associations forming democratic societies in the fields of politics, religion et al. Democracy in this Tocquevillian sense requires peace in order to thrive, with war regarded as an exception.

Memory is multifaceted, and its precise ethical relevance difficult to grasp. In her essay on the ethics of memory, *Jasna Čurković Nimac* regards memory as constitutive for the human condition, acknowledging the benefits it provides in terms of healing, empathy, protection et al. On the other hand, memory may be abused, and referring to Elie Wiesel, Nimac understands the volatility of memory, turning from a shield into a sword causing violence instead. In other words, violence can instigate as well as prevent violence. Nimac uses Ricœur as a warning voice, alerting us of the possibility of massive manipulation of memory by power, precisely because it is so intertwined with identity. Therefore, it is hardly surprising for Nimac that claims of possessing memory may produce violence, which in turn produces new memories. Moreover, collective memories, removed from the original socio-historical context, can very well be treacherous, even more so when used by regimes in order to rewrite, twist or erase historical memories. In an ethical perspective, memory according to Nimac is not unambiguously good, but rather dangerously ambiguous. The question is, thus, what we may be obliged to remember. The inherent necessary link would be between truth and memory. Once embedded into narrative structures, memory acquires an existential value of truth for us, which in turn sharpens the demand to filter them critically. As with truth, the right dosage of application might trigger violence or reconciliation. For Nimac, it is important to avoid memory imprisoning ourselves, impeding our agency and personal development. Simply but, we have an imperative to remember, but also sometimes to let these memories go.

The erection of a new European order after World War II fascinates *Elke Schwinger*, who seeks to unravel the state of peace. Using Kant, she identifies peace not as a notion preceding human order, but as a product of rational subjects. In this regard, the European Union is a remarkable success story, with its trans-nationalisation of sovereignty and the development of a supranational society, albeit *in nuce*. In view of the recent Ukrainian-Russian crisis, Schwinger argues that it almost seems as if the process of European integration has led to the disability to lead war. Having created a zone of stability and prosperity, the EU and its peoples would have reduced the probability of war, just as Kant predicted for the republic. Since war has been moved to other battlefields than those of traditional warfare, however, the EU is also taking part in economical hegemonisation and in this regard contributing to the dissolution of clear distinction between war and peace, friend and enemy. The new international order has produced large supranational unities and organisations, whose contribution to the state of cosmopolitanism has brought danger with it. Since peace has surpassed the traditional borders of states and other forms of human interaction, so has war, and while the process of civilisation seem to have diminished warfare in its traditional sense, a critical view on the aggressions and »new« forms of warfare are needed in order to sustain political structures able and capable of dealing with the new reality of international relations. Schwinger's position in this regard a call for a very astute democratic deliberation of how and when the vision of eternal peace needs to be defended.

The paradigm of »just peace« has been quite uncontroversial in theological ethics of peace, but it has been questioned critically for several years by the demand for (more) »realism« with respect to political crisis and armed conflicts. »Realism«, in this case, serves as a category of international relations in political sciences in contraposition to »idealism«. *Frederike van Oorschot* delivers a sketch of a »Theological Realism« with recourse to Reinhold Niebuhr's »Christian Realism«, thus refining the vague term »realism« in its onto-theological, revelation-theological, anthropological, eschatological, and political dimensions. Niebuhr and his thinking undergo a remarkable revival in political thinking especially in the United States of America increasing interest in political rhetoric as well as in the research of international relational studies. Van Oorschot demonstrates how Niebuhr's thinking might become relevant for a European ethics of peace—also beyond the US-American debate—referring to Niebuhr's »Christian Realism«. Van Oorschot presents it as a multidimensional model of the relations of reality serving as a dynamic category of reflection and, thereby avoiding the inadmissible reduction of complexity of reality. Van Oorschot concludes that Niebuhr's concept of Christian Realism, further developed, is suitable for a contemporary ethics of peace, as long as it is not simply applying Niebuhr's dimension to current problems but using his model as an analytical tool.

»We are more than ever forced to take war as a serious question in theoretical as well as practical terms« states Karl Barth in his major work, the *Kirchliche Dogmatik*. But what does it mean to take war seriously? Does it mean to propagate humanitarian interventions unconditionally? *Dennis Schönberger* scrutinizes the ethics of peace elaborated by Karl Barth, delivering a profound and responsible basis for evaluating the legitimacy of humanitarian interventions which are contested from an ethical and juridical point of view. In Schönberger's view, Barth's ethics of peace provides answers by putting the question of peace before the question of war, thus elucidating the term »humanitarian intervention«. For Schönberger, it is quite obvious that Karl Barth relies on God's peace guaranteed in Jesus Christ in ethical terms of reconciliation and law. Focussing on the power of reconciliation disclosing reality entirely, Barth distances himself from any principlism in the ethics of peace. In contrast to current contributions Schönberger argues with Barth against a *pax-iusta* paradigm, since it is nothing else but the *iustum-bellum* doctrine in disguise. Schönberger demands to elaborate the necessary questions lying before and beyond the question of

humanitarian interventions—conceptualising any answer as a venture framed by the reality of God’s reconciliation.

Being faced with pain and terror people suffer from their own government one may—from a particular point of view—feel urged to end this situation according to *Peter G. Kirchschräger*. On the one hand this confronts us with the question of humanitarian interventions disrespecting the sovereignty of states, on the other whether there is even a duty to end pain and terror, particularly when one cannot claim for oneself to be a victim of pain and terror. »What is at stake here is not making the world safe for big powers, or trampling over the sovereignty of small ones, but delivering practical protection for ordinary people, at risk of their lives, because their states are unwilling or unable to protect them«, Kirchschräger citing the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty 2001. Kirchschräger reflects on humanitarian interventions as a means to end violence or at least make it impossible in future. Therefore he scrutinizes the relevant terms: ›humanitarian intervention‹, ›responsibility to protect‹. In an ethical perspective, humanitarian interventions suffer from the challenge that while a means to end suffering and death of people, it causes harm and loss at the same time. Hence, there is a danger of humanitarian interventions becoming instrumentalised for third-party purposes, leading to the principal question whether—and if so —how humanitarian Interventions can be legitimised. Ethical judgement of humanitarian interventions must be based on a careful evaluation of the extent to which human rights will be violated by a humanitarian intervention taking into account that, on the one hand, every human right has to be valued as much as the others, and, on the other hand, it would occur counterintuitive intervening with any violation of a human right. Kirchschräger argues that the violation of human rights constitute a necessary but not sufficient condition for humanitarian interventions, designing a multi-stage model of questions and principles to assess when and why humanitarian interventions can be legitimised in an ethical perspective. Last but not least, it has to be clarified what obligations arise from ethical legitimised humanitarian interventions.

Is there war or peace at the beginning of man? *Erwin Bader* tries to trace back this question to the origins of mankind claiming that peace corresponds to the nature of man more likely than war does. Avarice and predation—e.g. the exploitation of minerals as violation of nature (Ovid)—have caused violence and war between man propelling a situation which Thomas Hobbes has called the »war by all against all« and the original state of man. By contrast to this more or less bellicistic narrative, Bader elaborates a more pacifistic concept rooted in a religious tradition and, not least, in the alliance between state and Christian church. From a Christian point of view, as Bader puts it, violence is the result of the fall of man but not a substantial characteristic of man at all. So, religion, and, particularly the coalition of church and state as formed in the late Roman Empire (Constantine, Theodosius) have prevented (some) military actions, notwithstanding the fact that this alliance called for concessions on the part of the church transforming her fundamental pacifism to a basic willingness to go to war (doctrine of just war, Augustine). Renaissance, according to Bader’s genealogy, marks a return to antique bellicism culminating in two World Wars, and showing the loosened relation between church and state. Presently, Bader states a »fatigue of the idea of peace« provoked by more wars than ever before. Despite this fact Bader’s request is to concentrate on the concept of peace being the »original law of existence« in order to overcome the burden of war.

This anthology also includes the keynote responses of Gotlind Ulshöfer: »The Responsibility to Protect – A Response« to Siddarth Malavarapu and of Göran Collste to Nigel Biggar’s keynote speech.

Finally, two contributions give valuable insights into the painful reconciliation process of two countries. Psychologist *Ayeray Medina Bustos* gives an overview of the truth and justice trial held in many cities of Argentina, clearly displaying the struggle to reconcile parties, even

though the perpetrators do not wish even to acknowledge their own wrongs. In this regard, Bustos raises a series of troubling questions about the nature of evil and our inaptitude to break through walls of non-communication or denial.

Dubravka Petrović Štefanac displays carefully how the Catholic church as an institution on various levels have tried to support reconciliatory dynamics in Croatia, even though not all believers adhered to this line of action. Yet, the different approaches within the academy, politics and church settings have clearly demonstrated that hatred and antagonism do not have to remain the dominating narratives after war.

All of these positions show the ethical impetus of regarding war as a challenge rather than a natural choice. Differently put, there is a clear uneasiness to see armed conflict as an obvious means of settling matters. It is interesting, then, that this thematic conference left participants with a clear notion of war as disconnected from the normality of our lives. War is in this regard no longer an inevitable companion, an ethical demand forming an inherent part of our realm of norms and notions. Rather, war is now understood as an exception. In this lies a somewhat comforting ethical discovery, namely that for ethics, the human state is originally warless. Differently put, peace is now understood as standard, not war. Simple as this may sound, human history, and particularly the last millennia, have shown how war was understood reversely, also in ethical terms. Hence, any recourse to armed conflicts would require far sounder and more substantial ethical arguments than certain political or religious traditions have been used to employ.