

## THE COLORS OF PACIFISM BETWEEN THE XIX AND XX CENTURIES

DOI: 10.7413/18281567198

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### *Abstract*

Through the reflections of contemporary philosophers and sociologists, such as Norberto Bobbio, Mulford Quickert Sibley, Wilhelm Emil Mühlmann, Michael Allen Fox, David Cortright, Larry May, John Rawls, Eric Reitan, Johan Galtung and David Boersema, this article reconstructs the lively debate on the pacifism between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was animated by prestigious intellectuals: from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Bertrand Russell, Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein via John Atkinson Hobson, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Friedrich Nietzsche, Norman Angell, Romain Rolland, Richard Nikolaus Coudenhove-Kalergi, Luigi Einaudi, Lord Lothian and Lionel Robbins. They encapsulated the main dilemmas derived from the changed political conditions of their time: the crisis of internationalism, the affirmation of imperialism, the spread of irrationalism, the beginning of the Great War, the establishment and failure of the League of Nations, the consolidation of totalitarian regimes, the outbreak of the Second World War, and the escalation of the Cold War. They developed various ideas and models which could ideally be linked to a “positive pacifism” according to which, as foretold by Baruch Spinoza, peace could not be conceived as mere absence of war, but above all the presence of justice, law and order (“Pax enim non belli privatio”).

**Keywords:** Internationalism, imperialism, irrationalism, human impulses, non-violence.

### **1. Ideas and Models in the Contemporary Debate**

Pacifism has existed in all higher cultures and in different historical epochs as a more or less distinct and vivid idea; indeed, in its broadest sense, it dates back to classical antiquity (for example, we can find invocations for peace in Xenophon and Isocrates), and in the religious conceptions of the main Biblical prophets and the first evangelical Irenicism, which were handed down in certain Protestant

sects (Quakers). This concept acquired authority through the theorisations of the «peace of submission», from the *Pax Romana* of the Augustan age to the *Pax Universalis* supported by Dante Alighieri in *De Monarchia* (1312-1313) as a function of the Byzantine Empire. In the nineteenth century there was a period of relative peace in Europe and in the world; this was identified with the *Pax Britannica*, which lasted as long as the British Empire retained its dominant position. For the purpose of this essay, it is useful to recall some reflections drawn from prestigious contemporary intellectuals. Norberto Bobbio (1909-2004) – Emeritus Professor of Political Philosophy at the Turin University – specified that pacifism could move in three directions depending on whether it acted on means, institutions or men. In the first case, he spoke of «instrumental pacifism», whose action was aimed at drastically limiting the instruments of war (doctrine and disarmament policy) or at replacing violent means with nonviolent ones (the theory of nonviolence, such as Gandhi’s doctrine of *Satyagraha*). Instead, «institutional pacifism» directed its criticism at the institution of the State through a twofold analysis. The first referred to «juridical pacifism», which, through law enforcement, aimed at establishing a universal state that would be able to resolve conflicts between sovereign countries. The second related to «social pacifism», according to which war was an event that depended on a certain notion of the State characterised by the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (in internal relationships), and by imperialist expansion (in external relationships): the remedy would be a transition from a capitalist society to a socialist one. Finally, he outlined the concept of «finalist pacifism»: peace could be achieved by an understanding of humans either from an ethical-religious standpoint or from a purely biological one. The real reason for war was to be found, respectively, in man’s moral defects (Leo Tolstoy) or in the primitive impulses of human nature (Sigmund Freud): in this respect, Bobbio used respectively the expressions of «ethical-religious pacifism» and «scientific pacifism»<sup>1</sup>.

In the *Enciclopedia del Novecento* (*Encyclopedia of the Twentieth Century*) Mulford Quickert Sibley (1912-1989), Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota, underscored the typical twentieth-century difference between «political pacifism» and «non-political pacifism»<sup>2</sup>. The former emphasised nonviolent political action (including parliamentary activity) and it was called

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<sup>1</sup> N. BOBBIO, *Il problema della guerra e le vie della pace*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1984, pp. 75 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> M.Q. SIBLEY, *Pacifismo*, in *Enciclopedia del Novecento*, vol. V, Roma, Giovanni Treccani, 1980, pp. 35-47.

«pacifism of the transformation»; the latter argued that peace movements were not to engage directly in the renewal of political and social institutions. For this reason, it was befitting to limit the economic needs of the citizens in order to avoid this involvement, proposing that they live in communities separated from industrial and commercial centers, and urban life; in essence, as Sibley pointed out, non-political pacifism implied «an ethic of isolation and simplicity». For example, it was incorporated by Tolstoy; in fact, in the last period of his life, the famous Russian writer became a pacifist-anarchist, focusing his attention on the values of simplicity, the necessity of hard manual labour, and the refusal to obey the state when it demanded tributes and compulsory military service.

In *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* Wilhelm Emil Mühlmann (1904-1988), Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at the Rupert Charles University of Heidelberg, stated that pacifism was based on three key points: the postulate of tolerance; religious and philosophical demands for the abandonment of violence; and programs aimed at the improvement of relations between nations, limitation of armaments, moderation and rational discussion of conflicts, and the institution of neutral courts of arbitration. As a rule, the basis for such programs lay in the conception of an ethical and harmonious human society. Mühlmann identified an «integral pacifism» that condemned violence as a means of settling conflicts in any circumstances and rejected war unconditionally, and a less severe «semi-pacifism» that permitted wars under certain conditions, for instance when they were «just», or decidedly wars of «defence», or wars against «unbelievers» or «rebels»<sup>3</sup>.

From this point of view it is possible to highlight the distinction between «absolute» and «non-absolute pacifism»; the first expressed an uncompromising condemnation and rejection of violence. One of its most recent supporters was the American philosopher Michael Allen Fox who argued that war was inconsistent with morality: «Even military action aimed at protecting people against acute and systematic human-rights violations» – he pointed out – «[could] not be justified»<sup>4</sup>. Along these lines, the US scholar and peace activist David Cortright used the concept of «realistic pacifism» to claim above all the vital need to avoid war in the nuclear age, although in other kinds of conflict «the

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<sup>3</sup> W.E. MÜHLMANN, *Pacifism and Nonviolent Movements*, in *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, Chicago, Benton Foundation and Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1974-1984, vol. 13, pp. 845-853.

<sup>4</sup> M.A. FOX, *Understanding Peace: A Comprehensive Introduction*, New York-London, Routledge, 2014, p. 126.

use of force, constrained by rigorous ethical standards, [might] be necessary at times for self-defense and the protection of the innocent»<sup>5</sup>.

This last reflection introduces us to the principle of «contingent pacifism» which accepted the permissibility or even necessity of war in some cases, by rejecting it in others; this concept was introduced by the US philosopher Larry May starting from the just war theory<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore in his famous *A Theory of Justice* (1971) John Rawls (1921-2002) declared that «the possibility of a just war [was] conceded», but considering also the danger of nuclear weapons «not under present circumstances»<sup>7</sup>. Another significant classification can be summarized through the distinction between «particular» and «universal pacifism»: particular pacifists articulated their position as merely personal and they did not condemn *a priori* the war system; on the contrary, universal pacifists blamed unconditionally war. In this regard Eric Reitan, Professor of Philosophy at Oklahoma State University, supported a sort of «personal pacifism» that need not be universally applied; he defined it as «a purely personal commitment to nonviolence, one that is not adopted on the basis of a perceived general obligation to refrain from violence»<sup>8</sup>. Lastly Johan Galtung and David Boersema have emphasized the distinction between «negative» and «positive» pacifism: the first described the mere absence of violence or war, while the second involved the construction and consolidation of harmonious relations among States to prevent it<sup>9</sup>.

## 2. Among Internationalism, Imperialism and Irrationalism

The reflections of Bobbio, Sibley, Mühlmann, Fox, Cortright, May, Rawls, Reitan, Galtung, and Boersema gave us fundamental insights to understand the evolution of pacifism between the XIX and

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<sup>5</sup> D. CORTRIGHT, *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 334.

<sup>6</sup> L. MAY, *Contingent Pacifism: Revisiting Just War Theory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> J. RAWLS, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 382.

<sup>8</sup> E. REITAN, *Personally Committed to Nonviolence: Towards a Vindication of Personal Pacifism*, «The Acorn», 10, 2/2000, pp. 30-41 (for the quotation, see p. 30).

<sup>9</sup> J. GALTUNG, *Violence, Peace, and Peace Research*, in «The Journal of Peace Research», 1969, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 167-191; D. BOERSEMA, *Positive and Negative Peace*, in FIALA A. (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Pacifism and Nonviolence*, New York, Routledge, 2017, chapter 10. The difference between a kind of «negative» and «positive» pacifism had already been underlined by Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677); in his *A Political Treatise* (1677) he had identified peace through the presence of justice, law and order: «Peace is not just the absence of war, but a virtue which comes from strength of mind». See B. SPINOZA, *A Political Treatise* (1677), in ID., *Complete Works*, edited by Michael Morgan, Indianapolis-Cambridge, Hackett Publishing Company, 2002, p. 699.

XX centuries. Within the various socialist theories war was considered not so much a product of a particular type of political regime as a particular form of production, namely the capitalist one; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels formulated their war theory. Only by abolishing the struggle between the working and capitalist classes, conflicts could be stopped, both within countries and internationally (a sort of «social pacifism» in external relationships); in fact, wars were none other than a direct result of the antagonisms between the bourgeoisies of the various countries that were competing for control of markets, hoarding of resources and domination over other States (this could create the premises for a «social pacifism» in internal relationships to resume Bobbio's definition). The First International argued one of its clearest stances on the problems of war and peace through a *Collective Address* adopted at the Geneva Peace Congress (9-12 September 1867); it was declared that «war weighs chiefly on the working class, in that it not only deprives it of the means of existence, but also constrains it to shed the workers' blood»; furthermore, it was stated that «peace, first condition of general well-being, needs in its turn to be consolidated by a new order of things that will no longer know in society two classes, the one of which is exploited by the other»<sup>10</sup>. This ideological approach constituted not only the basis on which the labour movement initially oriented its action, but also the reference point for the subsequent development of Marx and Engels's thoughts on the causes of war, namely Lenin's theory of imperialism. This involved a review of the internationalist strategy, which manifested itself mainly through the total aversion to war generated by the system of bourgeois States. Faced with a massacre that was likely to involve the proletariat, the workers' cause – ideally united by a feeling of solidarity – could be pursued through strong support for peace. The outbreak of the First World War caused the failure of internationalism.

Pacifism was antithetical to imperialism as a concept based on the theory of «Reason of State», with particular reference to the German doctrine of the power-state; it highlighted the primacy of foreign politics over domestic politics. While not excluding peace *a priori*, imperialism pursued it through the political, military and above all economic hegemony of the stronger countries over the weaker ones. The spread of the capitalist model profoundly influenced relations among States between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; the growing economic and social interdependence led

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<sup>10</sup> G.D.H. COLE, *A History of Socialist Thought*, 4 vols., London-New York, MacMillan-St. Martin's Press, 1953-1968, vol. II, *Socialist Thought: Marxism and Anarchism 1850-1890*, p. 115.

industrialised countries to seek new markets. The affirmation of imperialism was analysed by the English economist John Atkinson Hobson (1858-1940). In his essay entitled *Imperialism* (1902), he confuted the thesis according to which wars were generated by man's aggressive natural tendencies; in short, they were not the product of «blind passions of races or of mixed folly and ambition of politicians»<sup>11</sup>; instead, wars were caused by the most economically developed countries which sought new investment opportunities outside the national borders after reaching the saturation threshold of their profits. Indeed the foreign policy of Great Britain (which inspired Hobson's work) was primarily embodied in «a struggle for profitable markets»; and this concerned also France, Germany, the United States and, more generally, all those countries in which «modern capitalism [had] placed large surplus savings in the hands of a plutocracy or of a thrifty middle-class»<sup>12</sup>.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924) described this phenomenon in his famous work *Imperializm, kak novejsij etap kapitalizma (Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, 1916)* starting from a different historical context, the Russian Revolution. In his view, the system of bourgeois States had involved the proletariat in the world war, because it was unable to resolve its contradictions without resorting to armed conflict. Lenin's analysis did not differ radically from Hobson's; his thought was innovative because he identified imperialism with «the highest stage of capitalism». More precisely, imperialism emerged «at a definite and very high stage of its development», namely «when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves in all spheres»<sup>13</sup>. At the end of this evolution, imperialism was «moribund capitalism, capitalism in transition to socialism»<sup>14</sup>; it could only be overcome in a violent way. According to this interpretation of history, summarized by the theories of the imperialist phase of capitalism, international peace could not be achieved except through the elimination of capitalism. Already two years before the formulation of Lenin's theories, the Manifesto adopted by the Zimmerwald International Conference of the Socialist Parties (5-8 September 1915) had explicitly stated that war was «the product of imperialism»; it represented the attempt of the capitalist classes

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<sup>11</sup> J.A. HOBSON, *Imperialism: A Study*, New York, James Pott & Company, 1902, p. 52.

<sup>12</sup> Ivi, pp. 60-61.

<sup>13</sup> V.I. LENIN, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), Chippendale, Resistance Books, 1999, p. 91.

<sup>14</sup> Ivi, p. 125.

of every nation to feed their greed for profit by the exploitation of human labour and natural resources. This view was confirmed during the following Kienthal Conference held in April 1916, which reaffirmed that «the modern development of bourgeois property relations gave rise to imperialist antagonism. The present World War is one of the consequences of these antagonisms in the interest of which unsolved national problems, dynastic aspirations, and all the historical relics of feudalism are being utilized»<sup>15</sup>. The affirmation of imperialist policy was one of the most debated topics within the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (*Social Democratic Party of Germany*, SPD); it is sufficient to remember the theses formulated by Karl Liebknecht (1871-1919) in *Militarismus und Antimilitarismus* (*Militarism and Anti-militarism*, 1907)<sup>16</sup>. On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1914, Liebknecht was the only representative of the Social Democratic Party who voted against the renewal of war credits in the *Reichstag*. At the outbreak of the First World War, he hoped for the awakening of the Socialist International; only the international solidarity of the working class could create the conditions to achieve secure and lasting peace and that was, the only way of calling a «halt to the bloody slaughter». Furthermore, the idea of peace was threatened by irrationalist philosophers which exalted war as a factor of moral or social progress. Irrationalism was not only the expression of a crisis of values, but also the favourite ground of those who accepted reality without having to worry about explaining it. This supine attitude spurred a mystical exaltation of war and therefore absolute obedience to the omnipotence of the State; man was not to understand, judge or criticize, but to obey because the purposes of history were inscrutable. Given this preliminary remark, it was not difficult to recognise the warning signs of the birth of a culture that in some countries (such as Germany and Italy) would show the triumph of violence. If the origins of this cultural crisis could be traced back to Social Darwinism, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was the author who best embodied the values (or rather the *disvalues*); the German intellectual re-valued man and his «will to live», denying the values of positivistic civilisation and outlining the concept of the Dionysian that was contrary to metaphysics, theology, the social system and the triviality of everyday life. It followed the nihilistic vision contained in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (*Human, All Too Human*, 1878), which overturned the

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<sup>15</sup> *The Attitude of the Proletariat Toward the Question of Peace (Resolution of the Kienthal Conference)*, in O. Hess Gankin, H.H. Fisher, *The Bolsheviks and the World War. The Origins of the Third International*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1940, pp. 421 sqq. (for the quotation, see p. 421).

<sup>16</sup> K. LIEBKNECHT, *Militarismus und Antimilitarismus*, München, Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands, 1907.

prospects of the bourgeois world; and the myth of human «redemption» described in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 1886) with the figure of the «Superman» solely conditioned by his «Will to Power». In *Morgenröte - Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurteile* (*The Dawn of Day: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, 1881) Nietzsche had foretold an era of absolute anarchy for men: «Whatever may be the influence in high politics of utilitarianism and the vanity of individuals and nations, the sharpest spur which urges them onwards is their need for the feeling of power – a need which rises not only in the souls of princes and rulers, but also gushes forth from time to time from inexhaustible sources in the people. The time comes again and again when masses are ready to stake their lives and their fortunes, their consciences and their virtue, in order that they may secure that highest of all enjoyments and rule as a victorious, tyrannical, and arbitrary nation over other nations»<sup>17</sup>. Nietzsche's theory was soon accepted by the German academic world, as evidenced by the posthumous publication of one of the most famous works by Heinrich von Treitschke (1834-1896), namely *Politik* (*Politics*, 1897-1898), which collected his lessons delivered at the University of Berlin; by supporting the idea of pan-Germanism through the doctrine of the power-state, he wrote: «Without war no State could be. All those we know of arose through war, and the protection of their members by armed force remains their primary and essential task. War, therefore, will endure to the end of history, as long as there is multiplicity of States»<sup>18</sup>.

No less provocative were the thesis expressed by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944) in his *Manifesto del Futurismo* (*Manifesto of Futurism*, 1909)<sup>19</sup>; article 9 of this document declared that war was the «only hygiene of the world». Therefore, it was identified as a kind of purification of the human spirit, the privileged place for a radical renewal of mankind and the fertile ground to give birth to a new man, even at the cost of many lives sacrificed in the name of a palingenetic idea. These very reflections would have inspired the different forms of totalitarianism developed in the following years in Germany, Italy and Russia. In turn, Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) wrote *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (*The Decline of the West*, 1918-1923)<sup>20</sup> through which he left neither possibility nor

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<sup>17</sup> F. NIETZSCHE, *The Dawn of Day* (1881), New York, The MacMillan Company, 1911, pp. 159-160.

<sup>18</sup> H. TREITSCHKE (VON), *Politics* (1897-1898), 2 vols., New York, The MacMillan Company, 1916, vol. I, p. 65.

<sup>19</sup> The *Manifesto of Futurism* was published also on 20 February on the front page of «Le Figaro».

<sup>20</sup> O. SPENGLER, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*, 2 vols., Wien-München, Braunmüller-Beck, 1918-1923.

hope for a future redemption of Western civilisation. His voice did not remain isolated; in fact, there were some who even hypothesised a sort of imminent «end of the world». For example, during the 1930s, the Swiss writer and historian Louis Gonzague de Reynold (1880-1970) described the disturbing spectacle of a continent, once ambitiously civilising, which had now lost its undisputed prestige and showed many signs of decay; so much so that he identified it with the very gloomy picture of a «tragic Europe»<sup>21</sup>.

### 3. A New European Order between the World Wars

Owing to the outbreak of the Great War, it was no longer possible to cultivate the idea – widespread in the previous century through positivist and evolutionary philosophy – that war could disappear with the growth of industrial societies. The efforts and interventions of prestigious figures proved fruitless; just remember the English journalist Norman Angell (1872-1967), the author of the 1909 pamphlet *Europe's Optical Illusion*<sup>22</sup>, expanded and published two years later under the title *The Great Illusion*<sup>23</sup>. In this essay, the English intellectual proposed the model of uneconomic war: in a world increasingly influenced by the «economic interdependence of civilized nations», conflicts that strengthened political supremacy had become futile and anachronistic. Angell feared the risks of a conflict, even more likely if the States had fallen into the «great illusion» of the traditional policy of imperialism, nationalism and colonialism. Wars for conquest, between established industrial countries such as Great Britain and Germany (the problems of relations between the two countries worsened with the Moroccan crises of 1906 and 1911, and with rivalry in naval construction) were futile because the international economic system involved a high degree of interdependence between such States, so enmeshed in one another that none could benefit significantly at the expense of the other. The main industrial States weren't able to capture one another's trade through wars or that they would gain from annexing one another's colonies. This would have been a «logical fallacy and an optical illusion [...], because when a province or State is annexed, the populations, who are the real

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<sup>21</sup> L. GONZAGUE DE REYNOLD, *L'Europe tragique*, Paris, Spes, 1934.

<sup>22</sup> N. ANGELL, *Europe's Optical Illusion*, London, Simpkin-Marshall-Kent & Co., 1909.

<sup>23</sup> ID., *The Great Illusion*, New York-London, Putnam's Sons, 1911.

and only owners of the wealth therein, are also annexed, and the conqueror gets nothing»<sup>24</sup>. It followed that even a victorious war did not involve any financial gain and, at the same time, did not serve people's general interest; In summary, war was not justifiable owing to its destructiveness which almost always outweighed any potential benefits, rather than from a belief that it was immoral. His «utilitarian pacifism» can be considered a kind of «particular pacifism» (if we consider Reitan's definition).

Angell's theses were rooted in English liberal thought, which, based on a utilitarian logic, assigned the harmonious and integrated development of relations between states to market potential, reaching the optimistic prediction that trade would eliminate the wars as costly and futile. This idea had already been advocated by Charles-Louis de Secondat de Montesquieu in *De l'esprit des lois* (*The Spirit of the Laws*) in the mid-eighteenth century; the French philosopher had observed: «Peace is the natural effect of trade. Two nations that differ from each other become reciprocally dependent; if one has an interest in buying, the other has an interest in selling; and thus their union is founded on their mutual necessities»<sup>25</sup>. And this reflection would find concrete expression a century later when John Stuart Mill wrote in the *Principles of Political Economy*: «It is commerce which is rapidly rendering war obsolete, by strengthening and multiplying the personal interests which are in natural opposition to it»<sup>26</sup>.

During the Great War Romain Rolland (1866-1944) evoked instead a highly idealistic and humanitarian idea of peace (a kind of «ethical pacifism» to quote the initial classification by Bobbio); through his extensive literary production, the French intellectual promulgated a creed of peace and brotherhood, drawing inspiration from the Russian Revolution and Eastern philosophy (Tolstoy, Gandhi, Gorky). When he took shelter in Switzerland during the First World War, he became a point of reference for the international peace movement; so much so that his tireless efforts earned him the Nobel Prize in Literature (1915). Moreover, in Switzerland he wrote *Au-dessus de la mêlée* (*Above the Fray*, 1915), published in the «Journal de Genève» (22-23 September 1914).

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<sup>24</sup> Ivi, pp. 36-37.

<sup>25</sup> C.L. MONTESQUIEU (SECONDAT DE), *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), 2 vols., London, Bell, 1914, vol. I, p. 341.

<sup>26</sup> J.S. MILL, *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), London, Macmillan, 1929, p. 582.

Despite his strong aspiration to place himself «above the fray» in order to maintain true impartiality towards the belligerent countries, Rolland expressed also deep empathy and moral indignation in the face of the huge tragedy. According to the author of *Jean-Christophe*, war did not represent a fatality, and therefore an inevitable phenomenon (a thesis supported for example by Hegel), but the result of people's weakness and folly; more precisely, the famous French writer defined the armed conflict that had just begun – using an incisive and metaphorical language – as a «sacrilegious melee offering the spectacle of a crazy Europe on the stake like Hercules mangling his own body with his own hands»<sup>27</sup>. Faced with the tragedy of a war on such a large scale unleashed by the «three rapacious eagles» (the German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires), it was necessary to promote the creation of a «High Moral Court», namely a kind of «Tribunal of Consciences» that could judge the crimes perpetrated. As proof of the noble humanitarian ideal of peace and brotherhood that distinguished his thought, he wrote that there was a need to elevate the human spirit «above the storms», removing «the clouds that can obscure it». Through almost utopian nuances, he finally hoped for the construction of an «[ideal] city where the fraternal and free souls will gather from all over the world»<sup>28</sup> to defeat national hatred and injustice. Thus Rolland's reflections on peace were based on quite different ideological assumptions compared to Angell: Rolland's pacifism (like Tolstoy's) was ethical and pedagogical enough to take on the features of a secular religion. On the contrary, Angell's pacifism was utilitarian: he did not care whether war was right or wrong, moral or immoral; more pragmatically, he considered it unnecessary and anachronistic.

The new European structure outlined by the Treaty of Versailles, spread the conviction that the overcoming of international anarchy represented the *conditio sine qua non* to achieve a lasting peace. The discussion of the future of the continental order was concomitant to the epochal crisis of the system of nation-states of the early twentieth century which led to the establishment of the League of Nations; the Geneva institution itself was the subject of a lively European debate in the 1920s. It is enough to remember Richard Nikolaus Coudenhove-Kalergi (1894-1972), the author *Pan-Europa* (1923) and the founder of the eponymous movement, who defined the League of Nations as an

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<sup>27</sup> R. ROLLAND, *Au-dessus de la mêlée*, in «Journal de Genève», 22 September 1914, p. 5 (translation from French by C.G. Anta).

<sup>28</sup> Ivi, pp. 29-30.

«inorganic structure»<sup>29</sup>, since it did not group States according to their historical, economic and cultural affinities, but «in a mechanical way».

Drawing from the doctrine set out by James Monroe in «America for the Americans», the Austrian diplomat claimed with equal strength the concept of a «Europe for Europeans» – a confederate alliance extending from Portugal to Poland, clearly separated from other world powers such as communist Russia and the British Commonwealth. Using the words *Föderation* (Federation) and *Staatenbund* (League of States) synonymously, he did not assign to them the same meaning as in Hamilton's federal tradition; in contrast, Luigi Einaudi (1874-1961) hoped for a «second sort of League of Nations» in the form of a super-state that exerted direct sovereignty on citizens, with power to impose taxes, and create and maintain its own army. The Italian statesman made a clear distinction between the principles of a «Federation», deriving from the example of the American Constitution, and a «Confederation», expression of a consolidated European tradition; the structure conceived by Thomas W. Wilson, Einaudi argued, referred to the latter concept because it constituted a sort of Alliance or League, unsuitable for ensuring everlasting peace<sup>30</sup>. In his opinion, only through the weakening of the absolute sovereignty of the European States – in the form of a federal union – it would be possible to overcome international anarchy and then avoid new conflicts. The need to overcome of international anarchy to guarantee lasting peace, a purpose that ideally united these intellectuals in their criticism towards the League of Nations, can be traced back to a form of «juridical» or «political pacifism» (to refer respectively to the analysis of Bobbio and Sibley).

The Treaty of Versailles did not promote a real reconciliation between the victors and the vanquished; on the contrary, it stirred up new antagonisms, derived mainly from a desire to keep Germany in a state of economic and moral inferiority. In Great Britain, a severe criticism of this situation was delivered by John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), who blamed the «Carthaginian Peace» of Versailles in his work *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*<sup>31</sup>. According to the English economist, who personally participated in the Paris Peace Conference, this punitive policy towards Germany would lay the foundations for a new war.

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<sup>29</sup> R.N. COUDENHOVE-KALERGI, *Pan-Europe* (1923), Paris, Puf, 1988, p. 68.

<sup>30</sup> L. EINAUDI, *La guerra e l'unità europea*, Milano, Comunità, 1948, pp. 122-123.

<sup>31</sup> J.M. KEYNES, *The Economic Consequence of the Peace*, London, Macmillan, 1920, p. 56.

This new political scenario induced two British liberals, Lord Lothian (1882-1940) and Lionel Robbins (1898-1984), to deepen their federalist hypotheses. In 1935, Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr) published *Pacifism is not Enough, nor Patriotism Either*; this essay carried a special message for the British peace movement because in his opinion it had not as yet understood the real causes of the war. In this work, Lothian considered peace not merely as a «negative condition» in which war was not being waged, but as a «positive thing» or more precisely that «state of society» in which political, economic, and social issues were «settled by constitutional means»<sup>32</sup>. He established three propositions: firstly, that war was «inherent» in a world of sovereign States; secondly, the League of Nations and the Briand-Kellogg Pact could not preserve «civilisation or peace»; and finally, peace could only be established by bringing the «whole world under the reign of law»<sup>33</sup>. He also refuted the thesis that capitalism and nationalism were the main causes of wars: on the one hand, capitalism was an «international force» as businessmen had few racial or national prejudices; on the other, nationalism was a «creative force» because it engendered a feeling of «common citizenship and common loyalty to the state» rather than of differences in race, language, culture or religion<sup>34</sup>. In Lothian's thought, pacifism and world patriotism among nations were virtues that were necessary but not in themselves sufficient for building a lasting peace: only a federation able to embrace not Europe alone but the whole world could create the right foundation to overcome international anarchy. In 1937, Lionel Robbins wrote *Economic Planning and International Order*. The famous economist of the London School of Economics drew from the problems concerning economic growth and social independence stemming from the Industrial Revolution; he argued that the market could not operate unless there was a structure in place to ensure the necessary rules for peaceful coexistence. Hence the need for «national states to surrender certain rights to an international authority [...]. There must be neither alliance nor complete unification, but Federation»<sup>35</sup>.

The idea of a European federation was supported not only by the English school, but also by the Italian school headed by Luigi Einaudi and Altiero Spinelli. In the 1940s, the federalist method found

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<sup>32</sup> LORD LOTHIAN, *Pacifism is not Enough, nor Patriotism Either*, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1935, p. 7.

<sup>33</sup> Ivi, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> Ivi, pp. 13-16.

<sup>35</sup> L. ROBBINS, *Economic Planning and International Order*, London, Macmillan, 1937, p. 245.

its main reference points in the *Manifesto di Ventotene* – written in 1941 by Altiero Spinelli (1907-1986) and Ernesto Rossi (1897-1967) during their political confinement on the Tyrrhenian Island and published in 1944 by Eugenio Colorni (1909-1944). The central idea of this work was based on the following reflection: the main cause of the wars that afflicted contemporary society was represented by the existence of absolute sovereign states, considering the other states as competitors and potential enemies. In this view, the European federation was designated as the priority target of a political programme that aimed at meeting the historical challenge of the time. According to the two Italian intellectuals, the criterion for the division between progressive and reactionary forces was no longer identifiable with the «formal line of major or minor democracy, of the superior or inferior socialism to be established», but rather with the line that discriminated between «those who conceive the old goal, that is to say the conquest of the national political power, as the essential aim of the struggle [...], and those who will see the creation of a solid international state as a central task»<sup>36</sup>.

So British and Italian federalists were inspired by Hamilton's thought of *The Federalist*; they implicitly compare the two American Constitutions of 1781 and 1787 and underlined the superiority of the federal model to the confederal one; in this context the European Federation could be considered a model to legalize the relationships among national States. Therefore it is possible to affirm that they implicitly supported a “positive pacifism” (to resume the classifications by Galtung and Boersema).

#### **4. Nonviolent Methods at the Sunset of the Second Millennium**

The diffusion of ideas and methods which were originally alien to the Western democratic tradition, but integrated themselves within, marked the first half of the twentieth century; this occurred because of the influence of religio-cultural systems and ideologies typical of East Indian and Buddhist rationality. Think for example of the theory of nonviolence derived from the teachings of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948), the «Great Soul» and the symbol of Indian independence from the British Empire. Gandhi had links with Western socialist and utopian thought; he was inspired by authors such as Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) and above all Leo

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<sup>36</sup> A. SPINELLI, E. ROSSI, *Il Manifesto di Ventotene* (1944), Napoli, Guida, 1982, p. 37 (translation from Italian by C.G. Anta).

Tolstoy (1828-1910); so much so that in his *Autobiography* the Indian intellectual pointed out: «It was [...] when I was passing through a severe crisis of scepticism and doubt that I came across Tolstoy's book, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, and was deeply impressed by it. I was at that time a believer in violence. Its reading cured me of my scepticism and made me a firm believer in *ahimsa* (nonviolence)»<sup>37</sup>. However the Gandhian doctrine of nonviolence had its deep roots mainly in Hindu mysticism and in the interweaving of two principles developed by the Indian philosopher: *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*. The concept of *ahimsa* established not to kill and keep a friendly attitude towards all human beings; the *satyagraha* (passive resistance) implied an agreement of one's own being with the truth, a practice of moral and sober conduct. In his view, the attempt to conform to these precepts would entail an inner human effort to try to solve every problem of existence with nonviolent methods. Just for these reason Gandhi's theories can be attributable at the same time to «instrumental», «universal» and «positive pacifism» (to quote respectively the concepts coined by Bobbio, Reitan, Galtung and Boersema).

From the First World War Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) vigorously supported the pacifist cause; in the Preface of his *Principles of Social Reconstructions* (1916) he underlined the distinction between «creative» and «possessive» impulses, together with the conviction that «liberation of creativeness ought to be the principle of reform both in politics and economics»<sup>38</sup>. People were often moved to act by blind and unconscious impulses and also by conscious and directed desires; it was not necessary to repress the impulses leading to war, but to redirect the energy and the vigour that would otherwise be put into killing people. Russell further analyzed the psychological causes of war through the essay *Political Ideas* (1917): he highlighted two different types of impulses: the «possessive» ones which satisfied the acquisition of private goods not always available since they were limited (they were attributable to the desire for property) and the «creative» or «constructive» ones which helped to acquire knowledge and, therefore, they could be always satisfied. The best society was the one in which «the creative impulses play[ed] the largest part and the possessive impulses the smallest»<sup>39</sup>. Political institutions had to increase «the opportunities for the creative impulses» by shaping

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<sup>37</sup> M.K. GANDHI, *An Autobiography*, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1969, p. 102.

<sup>38</sup> B. RUSSELL, *Principles of Social Reconstructions*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1916, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> ID., *Political Ideas*, New York, The Century Company, 1917, p. 8.

education and to diminish «the outlets for the possessive instincts» as synonyms of force and domination<sup>40</sup>.

Therefore Russell was interpreter of a «scientific pacifism» (to recall Bobbio's definition). Indeed the Welsh philosopher supported implicitly Sigmund Freud's theses concerning the darker side of human nature; in two 1915 writings entitled *Triebe und Triebchicksale (Instincts and Their Vicissitudes)*<sup>41</sup> and *Zeitgemäßes über Krieg und Tod (Thoughts for the Times on War and Death)*<sup>42</sup>, the father of psychoanalysis had already identified aggression as an inherent impulse of man. Only in the essay *Jenseits des Lustprinzips (Beyond the Pleasure Principle, 1920)*, however, he specified this new orientation; the aspects of life could be explained through the antagonistic action of two opposing instincts, namely Eros and death: «The expressions of Eros were obvious and noisy enough», while «the death drive worked silently» within the organism towards the external world, appearing as a means for aggression and destruction<sup>43</sup>. In the paper *Das Ich und das Es (The Ego and the Id, 1923)*, Freud confirmed the existence of the «sexual» and «death» instincts by emphasising that «the precarious balance of life» derived from the «fusion of the two classes»<sup>44</sup>. While in the essay entitled *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur (Civilization and Its Discontents, 1929)*, he further highlighted the link between individual aggressiveness and war: «*Homo homini lupus*. Who [...] will have the courage to dispute this assertion?»<sup>45</sup>. As Freud wrote, it was enough to remember the numerous atrocities that had marked human history: from the invasions of the Huns or of the Mongols under Genghis Khan and Tamerlane to the horrors of the Great War, passing through the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders.

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<sup>40</sup> Ivi, p. 34.

<sup>41</sup> S. FREUD, *Instincts and their Vicissitudes*, in Id., *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movements, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*, vol. XIV (1914-1916), London, The Hogarth Press-The Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1957, pp. 117-140.

<sup>42</sup> ID., *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death*, ivi, pp. 275-300.

<sup>43</sup> S. FREUD, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in Id., *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works*, vol. XVIII (1920-1922), London, The Hogarth Press-The Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1955, pp. 1-63.

<sup>44</sup> S. FREUD, *The Ego and the Id*, in ID., *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. The Ego and the Id and Other Works*, vol. XIX (1923-1925), London, The Hogarth Press-The Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1961, pp. 1-66 (for the quotations, see pp. 39-40).

<sup>45</sup> ID., *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929), New York, Norton & Company, 1961, pp. 58-59.

In the second half of 1932, Freud was involved with Albert Einstein in a public discussion about the psychology of war; more precisely the father of relativity initiated a public debate with the founder of psychoanalysis under the auspices of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, the advisory organization of the League of Nations created to promote international exchange between scientists, researchers and artists. Their correspondence was published under the title *Why War?* (1933)<sup>46</sup>; in his letter dated 30 July 1932, Einstein wrote that peace could be achieved through the establishment of an international «legislative and judicial body» in order to settle disputes arising among countries, provided that each of them accepted its judgements unreservedly. It was a difficult goal to achieve because «the craving for power» generally manifested by the governing classes was «hostile to any limitation of national sovereignty»<sup>47</sup>. He also shared the opinions expressed by Freud since 1915, so much so that he stressed that humans had within them a «lust for hatred and destruction»; he argued that these instincts existed in a «latent state», but they could emerge when political leaders stirred up their nationalistic and militaristic passions and he concluded by asking the father of psychoanalysis if it was possible to «control man’s mental evolution» in order to make him secure against «the psychosis of hate and destructiveness»<sup>48</sup>. In his detailed reply dated September 1932, Freud agreed with Einstein on the need for a «central authority» with the «right of giving judgment upon all conflicts»<sup>49</sup>. In this regard, it was necessary to pursue two objectives: the creation of a «supreme agency» and its investment with an adequate executive force; according to the Austrian psychologist, the League of Nations fulfilled the first condition but not the second: in fact, the Geneva institution had «no power of its own and [could] only acquire it if the members of the new union, the separate States, [were] ready to resign from [the League]” to acquire a “coercive influence»<sup>50</sup>. Regarding the two types of human instincts – the «erotic or sexual» ones and the «aggressive or destructive» ones – Freud specified that each of them was indispensable since all aspects of life derived from their interaction, whether they «work[ed] in concert or in opposition». He admitted that there was «no

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<sup>46</sup> A. EINSTEIN, S. FREUD, *Why War?*, Paris, Institute of Intellectual Cooperation-League of Nations, 1933.

<sup>47</sup> Albert Einstein to Sigmund Freud, 30 July 1932, in EINSTEIN, FREUD, *Why War?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>48</sup> *Ivi*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>49</sup> Sigmund Freud to Albert Einstein, September 1932, in EINSTEIN, FREUD, *Why War?*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*.

question of getting rid entirely of human aggressive impulses»; war could be avoided only by indirect means such as the development of emotional relationships between men, and the establishment of a «superior class of independent minds» able to guide the masses too often influenced by political power and by the Church's conditioning regarding freedom of thought<sup>51</sup>.

In the aftermath of the Second World War Einstein's pacifism would have evolved; because of the destructiveness of the nuclear bomb, its secret must be entrusted to «a world government» (a clear expression of a «juridical pacifism», if we refer to Bobbio's expression) initially composed of the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, the three Powers that possessed the main military strength. Therefore he wrote an *Open Letter to the General Assembly of the UN* in October 1947. The UN – he specified – was a relevant institution provided that governments considered it a «transitional system towards the final goal», namely the establishment of «a supra-national authority» with «sufficient legislative and executive powers to keep the peace»<sup>52</sup>. Firstly, it was necessary that the General Assembly increase its authority so that the Security Council, paralyzed by the power of veto of the individual states, was subordinated to it; secondly, it needed to modify the UN's method of representation because the appointment procedures by national governments did not allow the appointees to act according to their convictions; thirdly, the General Assembly had to support the establishment of a supranational order while taking effective steps in all those countries in which peace was threatened. In this way the UN could create the foundations for a «real world government» initially composed of «at least two-thirds of the major industrial and economic areas» of the planet. The discovery of the Hydrogen bomb, tested for the first time by the United States and the Soviet Union between 1952 and 1953, aroused further fear in the international community and caused the escalation of the Cold War. In December 1954 the BBC broadcast a speech by Russell on «Man's Peril from the Hydrogen Bomb»; he enclosed the text along with a letter to Einstein dated 11 February 1955 by proposing to him that «six men of the very highest scientific repute, headed by yourself», free from pro-communist or anti-communist bias, could make «a very solemn statement about the

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<sup>51</sup> Ivi, pp. 11-13.

<sup>52</sup> A EINSTEIN, *Open Letter to the General Assembly of the United Nations*, «United Nations World», no. 8, October 1947, pp. 13-14.

imperative necessity of avoiding war»<sup>53</sup>. These were the premises that led nine other scientists to sign the Russell-Einstein Manifesto<sup>54</sup>; it described the potential scenario deriving from the use of the H-bomb; faced with «the tragic situation which confronted humanity», as we read in this document, scientists had to gather in conference to assess the danger posed by the developments of the new weapon and to discuss a resolution, not «as members of this or that nation, continent or creed, but as human beings, [...] whose existence [was] in doubt»<sup>55</sup>.

The lively and intense debate on pacifism (and theories of war) between the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries was livened by prestigious intellectuals: from Marx and Engels, to Gandhi, Russell, Freud and Einstein passing through Hobson, Lenin, Liebknecht, Nietzsche, Angell, Rolland, Butler, Coudenhove-Kalergi, Einaudi, Lord Lothian and Robbins. Some of them re-examined and deepened the ideas of those who, over the centuries, had interpreted international relations on the premise of the analogy that States could be considered as citizens belonging to the same community. Hence the need to transfer the traditional model of natural law from the individual level to the interstate one, as individual countries were still in a sort of belligerent and potentially unsafe state of nature. In this perspective the idea of a world government could be considered as a model to legalize relationships between different countries and it could guarantee a lasting peace through the abolition of the absolute sovereignty of individual States; all this called to mind Hobbes's contractualism in the Kantian sense, by giving it a cosmopolitan value. Anyway they sought to encapsulate the main dilemmas and problems derived from the changed political conditions of their time: the birth of socialist internationalism, the affirmation of imperialism, the beginning of the Great War, the establishment and failure of the League of Nations, the consolidation of totalitarian regimes, the outbreak of the Second World War, the origin of the atomic age and the escalation of the Cold War. Although they deepened various forms of pacifism, each of them with various nuances, they could ideally be linked by a «positive pacifism» according to which, as already foretold by Baruch Spinoza, peace could not

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<sup>53</sup> B. RUSSELL, "In common with every other thinking person", 11 February 1955, Albert Einstein Archives 33-199, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem.

<sup>54</sup> They were the Americans Percy Williams Bridgman, Herman Joseph Muller and Linus Carl Pauling; the British Cecil Frank Powell and Joseph Rotblat, the French Jean Frédéric Joliot-Curie, the Polish Leopold Infeld, the Japanese Hideki Yukawa, and the German Max Born.

<sup>55</sup> Russell's declaration dated 9 July 1955 was published by «The New York Times» on 10 July 1955.

be conceived as mere absence of war, but above all the presence of justice, law and order. Recalling implicitly the formula «Pax enim non belli privatio» they supported a fundamental paradigm of the modern political theory.



Sesto San Giovanni (MI)  
via Monfalcone, 17/19



& Ass. AlboVersorio Edizioni  
Senago (MI)  
via Martiri di Belfiore, 11

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Autorizzazione del Tribunale di Varese n. 893 del 23/02/2006.  
ISSN 1828-1567



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