

WAR

War, as we know it, is a relatively new phenomenon in the history of humanity. That groups of people have inflicted damage on other groups is nothing new. But, as Quincy Wright has shown, the most common form of war is what he calls "social war", a ritual where groups may attack each other, but it all stops at the first drop of blood or casualty.

War, in order to obtain economic and political goals, to rob and to dominate, is a more recent phenomenon, related to what is usually called "civilization". The more society is characterized by agriculture (as opposed to hunting-gathering or cattle), the more they are organized as a state (as opposed to clan, tribe, village) and the more internal division of labor there is (over and above ^{what is found in} all societies, based on gender and age) the more belligerent the societies seem to be; in the sense that they use aggressive wars to obtain economic and political goals. As the structural characteristics mentioned also are typical of Western societies ("modern", "developed") one would expect their structure to predispose particularly for belligerence. But then the significance of Western social cosmology, or deep ideology/structure, should also be mentioned. There is the idea of being the center of the world with social formulas valid for the whole world - as it is expressed in the missionary command (Matthew, 28:18-20). War becomes not only a right but a duty, as also expressed in Islam and in the secular offsprings of Christianity, liberalism and marxism.

War is getting more dangerous over time, in the sense that the risk for the belligerents of getting killed is increasing, and an ever greater portion of those who are killed are civilians. The percentage of those fighting who were killed was in the Middle Ages not more than about 2%; in the First world war the number increased to about 40%. But, whereas only one quarter of those killed in the First world war were civilians this had increased to about one half in the Second world war and ^{was} above 75% in the Indochina wars. It should be noted that in a major nuclear war there will be many casualties in non-belligerent powers due to fall-out -- a new phenomenon. In addition there will be casualties after hostile action has ceased due to long-term

effects, and effects on the non-human environment so far unheard of. Thus war may attain cosmic dimensions, some kind of undoing of the latter stages of Creation as envisaged in Christianity.

In order to understand wars it is insufficient to focus on the arms used; equally or more important is the conflict formation within which the war is enacted. If we divide the world in Center and Periphery countries depending on where they are located in the international division of labor we get three major types of wars:

Center-Center wars - the current East-West conflict would be of that type.

Center-Periphery wars: the current North-South conflict would be of that type

Periphery-Periphery wars: these are often, disparagingly, referred to as "local wars".

Characteristically Center countries, and particularly the superpowers, regard their own conflicts as the real ones, and see everything else as derived from them, not without some reason. However, in the post Second world war period the Center-Periphery wars have been by far the most important. At least 70% of the belligerent activity in the about 150 wars after 1945 can be said to fall in this category: all the national and people's wars of liberation. The problem has been how to get out of the colonial or neo-colonial grip the Center countries have had and have on the Periphery countries of various kinds. The typical conflict formation within this pattern has been classical: an alliance of the Center country with their ^{local} bridgehead, economic and political elites, against people, often also against the intellectual elites in the Periphery. If one superpower or bloc is involved in one end of the conflict the other one can usually be counted on to be involved on the other end, but meticulously avoiding direct confrontation in order not to escalate into the East-West formation so saturated with nuclear capability. But the sum of the Center-Periphery and the Periphery-Periphery wars, in terms of casualties, is already of the magnitude of a Third world war, only that it does not conform to the European formula for a world war: Germany crossing the Rhine ^{and the Oder,} or a Blitz attack on one of the present superpowers - like the German Operation Barbarossa on the Soviet Union 22 June 1941 and the

Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor 7 December 1941-- both actions that have predisposed today's superpowers for a Nevermore policy of guarding against a first strike through incessant quantitative and qualitative armament, making arms both more destructive and less vulnerable.

If nuclear war is a macro war and conventional (without weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear, biological, chemical, environmental and radiological weapons) wars are meso wars, then what would be micro war? Clearly what is often referred to as terrorism (by those against whom it is directed). The target is more precise, such as selected individuals and places; the weapons have short range and small impact areas, such as hand-guns. Such micro wars may become parts of any concrete pattern of warfare but are probably particularly important in Center-Periphery contexts as the form of warfare chosen by the weak. Dialectically it leads to counter-terrorism, military-police action, torture, death squadrons etc. It would be artificial not to include this in the concept of modern warfare, just as the old distinction between external and internal wars ("civil wars") becomes meaningless with the internationalization of almost all major conflicts today.

In the fight against war there are two broad approaches: directed against the arms, and directed against the conflict with a view to solving the deeper lying causes. The former has not been a success as we know from a high number of disarmament conferences that have not reduced the total amount of destructive power but possibly shifted it to other forms, reflecting technological changes. One possibility here might be to direct those changes in the direction of purely defensive arms and adopt a non-provocative military posture, somewhat along the lines of the Swiss, the Yugoslavs, the Austrians and the Finns in Europe.

Conflict resolution, however, remains a basic condition, necessary if not sufficient, for avoiding wars and war-like activities. The problem is, as a rule, that conflict resolution presupposes some kind of change, usually also some redistribution of power and privilege, and will be resisted by those interested in status quo. And that tends to be the same as those with a generally expansionist and domineering stance in world affairs, and with material and political interests all over the world.

PEACE

Historically ^{can be identified,} a number of peace concepts, all of them carriers of different ideas that could be joined together under a richer concept of peace than usual ^{found.} Most important in the Western tradition is the Roman "Pax", absentia belli, in other words a negative concept of peace - defined among countries. The Greek "eirene", the Arabic/Hebrew "sala'am/shalom", and the Japanese/Chinese "heiwa/chowa" point in another direction which can be better understood by such terms as "justice", "harmony". In the Hindu, ^{gandhian} and Jainist/Buddhist traditions "shanti" would be more of a harmony concept and "ahimsa" (the negation of "himsa", violence), a clear non-violence concept. These differences are important for in all cultures "peace" (or that which tends to be translated into "peace") stands for something positive, the name of a goal, perhaps one of the deepest and highest goals.

[The concept of "peace" becomes a part of social ideology, embraced by everybody. As such it will also attain a class character. "Absence of war", who benefits from that? Not those with just grievances fighting for a more just world, but possibly merchants ^{and others} who can profit from peaceful relations among states. "Peace" becomes that which makes inter-state trade possible. And who is served by "harmony" if not precisely those on top of a structure distributing power and privilege very unequally, even so that those at the bottom are dying from misery? Moreover, "nonviolence" may mean pacification rather than peace in a more positive sense. "Harmony" may also be interpreted as "justice" - but that may be a synonym for equality as well as for giving more to the more worthy, ^{the} aristocrats or meritocrats.

In peace research, as it took shape at the end of the 1950s, the debate about the meaning of that very concept proved to be fruitful. Thus, from the beginning it was clear that there were two classes of meanings: "negative peace" meaning absence of war and violence (any type of destruction); "positive peace" coming closer to integration, union - with connotations of harmony and justice. But then violence, destruction, that which should be absent for a

peace certificate to be issued, as a minimum condition, also has to be subdivided. On the one hand there is the direct violence most people are thinking of ~~it~~ destroys quickly and there is usually a subject behind, intending that destruction. On the other hand there is the structural violence, built into the social structure, also capable of killing, but then usually slowly (through hunger and misery, disease and decease) and as a rule not steered by some clear intention - it just is. Structural violence is not the same as institutionalized violence - that is direct violence which has become an institution, like vendetta. Structural violence is, hence, very closely linked to social verticality in general, and to the class structure of a society in particular. It can be measured; much like direct violence is measured, by counting casualties structural violence can be measured in numbers of years not lived relative to the potentially possible, given the knowledge, technology and resources at our disposal on the assumption that all parts of the population can fully benefit from them. A life destroyed at the age of thirty through undernutrition is at least half a murder; on top of that would come reflections on loss of life quality due to morbidity, and not only life quantity due to mortality. That loss may also take the form of repression and/or alienation, thereby tying freedom and identity to the concept of peace - in the tradition of non-Western peace theories.

Through the concept of structural violence the concept of negative peace is extended. "Absence of violence" is more than absence of direct violence; it also implies absence of repression and alienation and exploitation, and other forms of verticality in the social structure. And this, then, points to the two main strategies for a peace process: distance (dissociation) and closeness (association) - peace through positive and negative approaches. Through the latter the peace concept gains in depth.

Best known in the theory of peace is the ^{dissociative} effort to achieve "security" (another word for negative peace), absence of direct violence, through distance: natural borders (rivers, mountain chains). Great distances (oceans, deserts), social distance (prejudice, discrimination) and social borders protected by

force, the means of direct violence, to punish transgressors so that "attack does not pay". Combining these four approaches we arrive at the nation-state, built into a balance-of-power system. The system can be said to date from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and the problems are many: natural borders and distances become ludicrous in the age of rockets, nationalist prejudices tend to break down in the age of extended interaction, the balance of power may break down in the age of multi-dimensional weapon systems with no agreement as to how much of this weapon is equivalent to how much of that, and because weapons that can also be used for an attack look offensive however much the intention is purely defensive - and, consequently, provoke.

Then there is the closeness, of associative approach, based on exactly the opposite idea: it is by bringing the parties together, not apart, that a peace structure can be built. There are conditions, however: that the parties are relatively equal, that they are built together in a relation not only of interdependence but also of equity; that there are ties in all directions and at all levels (governmental, public, private; elite-level, people-level, etc.). It should be sufficient to point to the relation between Germany and France before the Second world war, and today to see the difference between the two strategies.

For structural violence there are also dissociative and associative approaches. Distance is created through decoupling, selective or more complete, e.g. by means of a struggle for liberation, violent or nonviolent. A condition for this is usually a high level of consciousness-formation about exploitation/repression, mobilization, confrontations, and a very goal-directed form of struggle (but not necessarily in that order; confrontations can also be conscientizing).

And then there is the closeness approach, recoupling, but then on the basis of equality. The history of the Nordic countries can be seen in this perspective, with a relatively solid, equitable recoupling. But nobody has so far been able to obtain this inside a society, reducing structural violence down to zero between classes within a country, possibly because decoupling easily leads to separatism and formation of a new state.