

3. “Democracies do not wage war on one another”* ⁱ

Western politicians (e.g. M. Thatcher and B. Clinton) have time and again voiced their conviction that democracies would not wage war on one another. They have basically only varied and repeated the one-hundred-year-old *topos* or old commonplace of liberalism that trade replaces war, or that trade will succeed war: since democracies grant precedence (priority) to the welfare, well-being and prosperity of the people (folk) and consequently to the economic [[element/sphere]], i.e. to the economy, they are of their essence and of their nature, peaceable (peaceful). The wars taking place, nevertheless, are to be put down (*or*: If wars still take place, they would have to be attributed) to the effect of pre-bourgeois or anti-bourgeois forces and to atavisms. Philosophers, who believe they have to grant to this banality a higher solemnity or consecration invoke Kant (*or*: who often think that they are uplifting and elevating commonplaces when they present them as classic sayings, hurried too, to add Kant). Now Kant indeed, in the emulation of many others before him, praised the beneficial influence of the “spirit of trade and commerce”, but nowhere did he write that democracies in general would not wage war, or at least not against one another. He had merely suspected or speculated that in comparison to the ease with which wars were declared by a cabinet (*or*: the monarchies at that time), democracies “thought long and hard before beginning such a bad, nasty game (*or*: such nasty games)”. However, this [[will take place]] only if the democracies concerned are “republics”, which means in Kant’s terminology: if they respect the separation of powersⁱⁱ. Because as is known, in Kant’s terminology, the term “democracy” meant in itself war-lustful, i.e.

warmongering and bellicose ochlocracy and “despotism”, as the ancient examples proved in his opinionⁱⁱⁱ.

And indeed, the ancient democracies by no means demarcated themselves from oligarchies and tyrannies because they boasted of their own peaceableness (peacefulness); Thucydides believed in fact that the worst paroxysms of violence (violent acts) and atrocities in the Peloponnesian War were to be blamed on, and were due to, the imponderable, erratic and wholly irresponsible passions of the democratic mass of Athens. The cult of antiquity in the French Revolution did not apply or refer to the peaceable (peaceful), but rather to the patriotic defence-ready (fortified) and combat-ready republics, which knew [[how]] to appreciate the virtues of war, and in fact did not shrink back and cringe before “just” wars of offence, attack and aggression. The programmatic coupling of democracy or rather republic, and peaceableness (peacefulness), is therefore a relatively new and specifically liberal-economic perception. In this respect, it is right and justified when researchers, who want to follow up the question and elucidate the problem with statistical means, direct and concentrate their attention primarily to and on the last two-three centuries. In the course of this, some deduce and document the peaceable (peaceful) character of democracies from the findings or ascertainment that seen overall, considerably fewer democracies have declared or conducted (waged) war(s) than other kinds of regimes (*or*: than different regimes). Others, however, relativise the value of these findings (and this ascertainment) by pointing to, or underlining, the lack of clarity of the concept of democracy, as well as to the fact that in a world in which democracies constituted a small minority, most wars must also start from, and be conducted by, non-democratic states. Only in an entirely democratic world can the question be answered conclusively and the problem be solved definitively.

Capable of enthusiasm for war

Nevertheless, one does not have to wait in vain so long[[, i.e. for the whole world to consist of democracies]]. Instead of this, it is recommended to seek compelling indications in the hitherto war praxis (i.e. practice regarding the waging of war) of states, which in accordance with the dominant understanding, were or are democratic (that is, they practised and applied or practise and apply parliamentarism, the separation of powers, a free public (space), free publicity, and so forth). An indication or clue for the essential peaceableness (peacefulness) of democracies would be for example the ascertainment that democracies, anyway, have never been capable of conducting and waging war(s) with a similar concentration of forces and doggedness, persistence, perseverance as for instance dictatorships; already their structural unsuitability and inappropriateness for the conducting and waging of war would have had to dispose them hence to peaceableness (peacefulness), since every act(ion) of war (war activity) would entail an unpleasant internal restructuring or change and about-face. However, there can be no talk about this. Great Britain has for example *inter alia* conducted two world wars, without changing its political constitution, i.e. polity^{iv}, in the slightest, and in the Second World War it in fact reached, at the high point of the [[war]] effort on both sides, a higher degree of mobilisation as to its war economy than national-socialistic Germany (*or:* and in the Second World War, when precisely the war effort on both sides was reaching its peak, Great Britain managed to achieve with its economy a higher degree of war mobilisation (mobilisation for war) than Nazi Germany).

Something similar can be said about the United States. 1914, moreover, proves that democracies are capable no less than autocracies (but was Germany at that time an autocracy at all? (*or:* if we accept that the Germany of that epoch/era did not constitute a constitutional state in the Western sense)) of being sucked in by enthusiasm for war – and nobody surely wants the blame for France's fear of

war (timidity, inhibition and shyness regarding war) of 1940 to be pinned on the democratic constitution, i.e. polity, as such, like the national-socialistic propaganda did that. Conclusion: democracies, *as* democracies, can therefore conduct and wage war with full force, i.e. with the catholic (universal, general) mobilisation of their forces.

A second indication of the peaceableness (peacefulness) of democracies, *because* they are democracies could lie or be found in the experience or ascertainment that democracies in war would have always allied themselves with other democracies, *because* these were democracies, and fought against despotisms, *because* these were despotisms. But one can only come to such a conclusion if one takes the propagandistic rhetoric regarding war aims (the aims of war *or* the objective goals of each and every respective war) at (their) face value. Can it seriously (in earnest) be asserted that the United States had (through the annexation of Texas) attacked Mexico and later Spain only because these countries were “despotisms”? Did England and France in 1914 ally themselves with Russia because Russia was more democratic than Germany, or for instance, were the German social democrats more in the right and more justified, when they rationalised their participation in the war as a (*or*: by invoking the) struggle against Russian despotism? Was the decisive factor for the renewal of the alliance of Western democracies with Russia in the Second World War the fact that Stalin’s concentration camps in the year 1941 were humaner than Hitler’s? And how would have the alliances probably turned out (precipitated, taken shape) if Stalin had the time and possibility as the first to raise, i.e. make a great hegemonial claim on ((in regard) to) the continent (*or*: if Stalin had e.g. prevailed in Spain and if in the West the circles had prevailed which recommended an anti-communistic alliance with Hitler)? It has therefore been demonstrated that (*or*: Conclusion:) also when democracies’ conduct and wage of war, geostrategic and or economic points of view remain decisive.

The dangers of mixing

If this dual conclusion is correct[[], i.e. that democracies are more than capable of waging war to the maximum intensity of any polity, and, that democracies wage war like other polities in the main for geostrategic and or economic reasons]], then war is not in the least a priori to be precluded in a world which consists of sovereign democracies, in the event one amongst them should exercise a policy (politics) which another democracy would find to be an existential threat. Regarding the fact of such a threat – as, on the other hand, regarding the concept of vital interest – a democratic consensus could thoroughly and wonderfully dominate. In regard to the (within the framework of NATO) allied and at the same time inimical democracies of Greece and Turkey, such a consensus dominates for example on both sides^v. The most recent fishing dispute between the likewise allied democracies of Spain and Canada, during which one was reminded of the usefulness of war ships notwithstanding [[that they belonged to democracies]], contained, in regard to this, obvious lessons for a future which would have to confront a scarcity of resources. The assumption or view that democracies of all polities would never find themselves or end up in such situations is simply absurd, especially when one thinks of the interrelation between modern democracy and consumption. And the assumption or view that in such a situation, democracies would then react towards the outside with the same political habitus (i.e. predisposition towards consensus) as in the regulation of internal matters of concern, presupposes the so-called “primacy of internal politics (policy)”. However, such a primacy exists just as little as the primacy of external politics (policy). There are only situations in which this or that factor in accordance with each and every binding interpretation is regarded as decisive.

And if, finally, someone retorts that modern democracies would of themselves tend towards world democracy, that is, towards the blurring of the boundaries between internal and external political space, and towards the internationalisation of the internal political rules of the game, then one could also again recollect Kant's text about eternal peace – this time, of course, a passage which, for obvious reasons, is hardly cited: precisely the “mixing” or “fusing, merging, amalgamating and melting together” of peoples seemed to the philosopher to put peace in danger. Yet even if democratic peoples (folks) remain in “separation or segregation” like good neighbours, as Kant preferred, they would not be lost for arguments in favour of war (bellicose/belligerent/warlike/martial arguments), if they needed them^{vi}. Nobody would rattle at or call into question the principle that “democracies do not wage war on one another”, but probably would deny that one's partner in war (war partner) – as the foe is supposed to be called, in the best communicative manner, in the future^{vii} – is a “genuine” democrat.

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ANNOTATION

P. 67: Headline (Introduction, Lead-in) of the FAZ: “The American president Bill Clinton in 1994 declared: “democracies do not wage war on one another.”^{viii} On this account, he characterised global democratisation as the “third” pillar of his foreign policy. Clinton with that followed the traditional self-understanding of liberal and commercial society, as it was formed, developed and cultivated in the eighteenth century. The principle “democracies do not wage war on one another” is an echo of the liberal Utopia, which historically proceeded the modern totalitarian Utopias. After the caesura (break or turning point) of the year 1989, this liberal Utopia seemed to be buoyed once again for a short time. An obvious and distinct symptom of this was that the thesis of the principled peaceableness (peacefulness) of democracies reappeared in politological discussion.”

^{viii} [[A quick Google search of the internet reveals that Clinton's actual words were “democracies rarely wage war on one another”, and, [democracies] “tend not to abuse their citizens' rights or wage war on one another”.]]

ENDNOTES

All endnotes are by the translator, and have nothing whatsoever to do with P.K.. Readers can and in fact **probably must** simply ignore them and draw their own conclusions from P.K.'s texts only, though some of the endnotes might be useful to some readers, and other endnotes are really only for the very few people who can look at themselves in the mirror and say "Oh my God, I'm really ugly, and retarded". I do it every day, and it's the only way to prepare yourself to be a truly profound thinker, and not a propaganda-spewing mouthpiece.

ⁱ The German title in the FAZ is: „Ein so schlimmes Spiel. Das Prinzip „Demokratien bekriegen sich nicht““ (= “Such a bad, nasty (evil, wicked, naughty, terrible) game (match, play, performance). The principle “Democracies do not wage war against one another””). The Greek title is: “Are democracies necessarily peace-loving (pacifistic)?”

ⁱⁱ I assume that Kant's understanding of the separation of powers would have been far more like Montesquieu's (see P.K.'s related book) than today's common understanding, though I am not certain because I haven't researched it, and won't ever have the time to research it.

ⁱⁱⁱ This is simply raising the issue of what is the definition of a democracy. I have discussed this at various points of the site www.panagiotiskondylis.com, particularly on the “Translator's Page – Prelude”.

^{iv} Everyone knows England has never had a “constitution”, etc.. Here, though, we're using German terminology which amounts to “polity”.

^v What P.K. is therefore saying is that the relations of Power or the correlation of forces is always the deciding factor – and not whether polities are democracies (howsoever defined) or not. Needless to say, e.g., the USA not once thought of how “democratic” Greece or Turkey were whilst overseeing or being Pontius Pilate with regard to the pogroms of 1942, 1955, 1965, the “absorption” of Imbros, Tenedos and Northern Cyprus by Turkey, etc.. All that matters are interests and Power. All the rest is Smokescreens and or Stardust for the Naive and or Retarded. And another country in the USA's position would have done exactly the same, or at least what it interpreted as being in its interests.

^{vi} The causes of war, as we know from *Theory of War* and elsewhere, have absolutely nothing to do with polities as such.

^{vii} HAHAHAHAHA!!! P.K. can't help himself. This acerbic and or aggressively sarcastic sense of humour is the greatest gift from Nietzsche and others, who were otherwise so lacking in the sociological-historical understanding of humans and societies.