

## 2. Trade (Commerce) and war<sup>i</sup>

Barely a year (*or*: Only two years)<sup>ii</sup> before the outbreak of the First World War, a newly published book drew the attention of a broad public (*or*: the wider reading public), it became the talking point of the European and American political-economic elite, and was immediately translated into several languages. Its author was the British publicist Norman Angell, and its original title, “The Great Illusion”, was rendered in the German version reviewed and discussed multiple times and positively, by means of [[the title]] “The false reckoning (bill, invoice, account, calculation)”. False was, according to Angell, the reckoning of (*or*: Victims of this great illusion were) those who anticipated from war(s) and conquest(s) the increasing of the power and of the affluence (prosperity) of their nation. The attained extent of the world-economic interweaving, the henceforth dense and rapid communication(s), and not least of all the international character of the finance and credit system<sup>iii</sup>, had already made the traditional means of power politics (politics of power) obsolete, and had turned economically robust small nations into the equivalent competitors of the great nations.

Although Angell in principle contested every meaning (*or*: radically disputed the significance) of military might (power) for the development of trade (commercial) activity, and castigated the British exponents of such perceptions and views with the same sharpness (acuteness, severity, acerbity, ferocity) as the German ones, he nevertheless approved and accepted the use of non-economic means of power and pressure if these were used for the purpose of the “restoration and maintenance of order”, and consequently would open the road of trade and commerce (*or*: and were for the protection of free trade). Wherever

public order already existed and held sway, as in civilised Europe, conquest(s) were superfluous; on the other hand, Germany would for example have the right to follow the example of Great Britain in India and, for instance, take care of, and impose, order in the Ottoman Empire (*or*: in the Ottoman domain/in Ottoman territory). Angell did not say or did not examine what would have to be done, or what would occur, if one side reserved for itself or claimed the role of the custodian of order in all crucial zones.

This was also not the sole gap (hole) or discrepancy (error) in his argumentation. He was, in economic terms, right in his ascertainment that colonial expansion as it was conducted from the 16<sup>th</sup> until the 19<sup>th</sup> century was from now on, owing to military-administrative costs, unprofitable, and at best to be replaced by direct or indirect (*or*: more or less direct) economic control. This ascertainment could not, nevertheless, alone and in itself support the general thesis of the, already having taken place, world-historical reversal of relations between economic and political-military power (*or*: However, this ascertainment did not suffice on/of its own to prove the general thesis that at a world-historical level, the relations between economic and political-military power had definitively been reversed). The leap in logic (logical leap) was, incidentally, tacitly or indirectly admitted, since (when) Angell declared that he did not want to assert the impossibility of great wars in the future, but simply to prove that war had become once and for all economically useless, in fact damaging<sup>iv</sup>.

But also here, his syllogistic reasoning did not remain consistent. Because in several places (excerpts) he expressed and made known his conviction that the progress of the interweaving of the world economy (economic intertwining(s)) would of itself (of themselves) render war impossible and would substitute physical violence with co-operation. This prognosis was obviously logically and historically something other than the diagnosis regarding the economic

meaninglessness and uselessness of wars. So that prognosis and diagnosis could coincide, it had to still be proven that all people in all cases give priority to immediate economic utility and benefit, and at the same time believe that one's own victory in war would also over the long run harm one's own economic interests<sup>v</sup>. The war which broke out when the publishing (and journalistic) success of Angell's book was still ongoing and lasting, showed that this proof had not been adduced, i.e. it was not proven that war could not break out.

Accordingly, despite all of that, the book did not in the least lose [[anything]] in topicality (timeliness, relevance), nor its adherents and supporters. When three years ago in Berlin [[i.e. 1994]], an American journalist put forward in a speech, similar thoughts, and I reminded him of Norman Angell, he readily confessed the source of his inspiration. Angell's theses attained popularity so easily because in an era in which international economic circulation/intercourse and international economic intertwining(s) had gained considerably (*or*: greatly increased) in volume and density, the early liberal topos or commonplace of the replacement of war by trade seemed to be confirmed with new evidence, that is, with resorting to, or holding the thread of, a long intellectual(-spiritual) tradition, and to fall on ground prepared long ago, i.e. on fertile ground. Nothing other than that is taking place in our days. In any case, around 1900 that evidence or those theses were regarded as irresistible – and indeed not only by liberal politicians, but also by most European military officers and strategists (strategic planners).

Few know today – and still fewer want to know it –, that the almost uncontradicted and undeniable predominance of the offensive military doctrine in regard to all European general staffs before 1914 was founded on the general conviction that economic life had in the meantime become so complex and delicate (sensitive) that it could not countenance and withstand a long war, that is, the decision must be sought as quickly as possible and fall, i.e. be acted upon

and put into practice, as soon as possible (*or*: war must be waged offensively and aggressively and have a quick outcome). In Germany, Moltke had already said this, but it can also be proven by [[scholarly]] research that Schlieffen had such thoughts as the basis and starting point of his strategic planning. An interrelation between the violation of Belgian neutrality and liberal-economistic points of view may seem to be an extreme paradox (*or*: may appear to be entirely paradoxical) in regard to which, however, only familiar, prevailing and easy schematisations are guilty (*or*: are to blame). The true – explainable in retrospect of course – paradox, lies in that the endeavours of all sides for a short war, ended up in a long war (*or*: in its (war's) prolongation).

In the period 1900 to 1914, German-French trade increased about 137 percent, and German-Russian trade about 121 percent. The trade between Germany and Great Britain doubled from 60 to 120 million pounds, and made up nine percent of British trade; more than half of the international cartels of production existing at that time were of joint German-British ownership, one of which in fact produced explosives (B. R. Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics. Europe 1750-1988*, New York 1992). If the economic signs and omens pointed to peace, thus the war, notwithstanding all of that, then breaking out, must have sprung from a logic which was not covered by, i.e. which was different to, the logic of the economy. The investigation of several historical examples does not allow, at any rate, the assertion that there exists a fixed causality, that is, a law in respect of the relations between trade and war, to be ascertained: all possible positive and negative correlations of both these magnitudes are historically attested to and witnessed. Theoretical generalisation may not (cannot) here go or proceed further than accepting (*or*: than the statement of) the parallel existence here of two different logics and two different motivations, which can coincide, but by no means must. On the contrary, both the liberal expectation that trade must replace war, as well as the vulgar-Marxist deduction (inference,

derivation) of war from economic causes, tacitly presume or presuppose the existence of empirically unprovable kinds and forms of law bindedness (determinisms or law(rule)-based necessities). In both cases what is apodictic, i.e. demonstrative (or, the manner of proving) rests on an economic determinism, in relation to which the liberal position, even this time, as so often, turns out like (*or*: the liberal positioning, if examined more carefully, is revealed as) vulgar Marxism with reversed signs (i.e. symbolism). Because only he who believes that economic antagonisms would exclusively give rise to wars, may also assume (or has the right to accept) that economic co-operation will definitely abolish war(s). The latter (economic co-operation abolishing wars) could, by the way, be regarded as the effective antidote to war if it originally would be inaugurated and cultivated with the express intention of functioning as the alternative to bloody conflicts. Regarding that, there are, however, no certain indications, only belated (*ex post facto*) rationalisations.

What drives men in relation to that, to co-operate economically are (*or*: Humans are driven to economic co-operation by) objective economic needs and necessities, which as such are not connected to any peaceful or inimical intention; only the positive or negative course or turn of the co-operative relation suggests such a connection with similar intentions, without this of course being inevitable. Towards the end or close of the twentieth century, the deeper objective reason of the growing global interweaving of the economy is the same which kept (and perhaps set) in motion the industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth century: an unprecedented and constantly increasing and constantly being reinforced population density, this time not on a European and limited, but on a planetary, scale. Precisely because in the next century the world-economic interweaving and intertwining will be under the aegis or influence of this objective pressure or factor, the struggles over, and problems of, distribution threaten to be sharpened and made more acute, rather than be

softened, moderated and tempered. After 1989, the voices increased which wanted to (inter)connect or interrelate (correlate) the impossibility of great wars between great nations with the growing global interweaving(s) of the economy (economic intertwining(s)). As the example of the First World War teaches (*or*: Just as the example of the epoch before 1914 shows), such an (inter)connection or interrelation is everything other than necessary. On the contrary, the reason in terms of power politics and world politics, is obvious in respect of that impossibility for the time being [[1997]]. One amongst the great nations, namely the American, is today so economically and militarily superior to all the rest, that taken individually, against America's will, neither alliances ready for (capable of) war can be formed or put together, nor does a resolute lone (rogue) great, in terms of power politics, nation appear to be conceivable (*or*: nor can another nation decisively exercise, also to an extreme extent, the politics of power (power politics)). Whereas the world situation was characterised around 1900 by an approximate parity of forces between the world-political crucial nations, around 2000 the world situation is determined by the (f)actual hegemony of one single nation.

Nobody can know how long this state of affairs or conjuncture will last, and under which circumstances it will be brought to an end and terminated, especially since the constellation (*or*: world) after the Cold War does not have fixed contours yet. In any case, today it is certain that not the economic co-operation of many equivalent states, but the political hegemony of one superior state is preventing a world war. What concerns Europe in particular then is that closer co-operation arose out of the impossibility of a new war between the great European nations, rather than the reverse. Since Europe lost world domination, the inner-European (intra-European) antagonisms also lost their world-historical meaning and significance (whoever dominates or rules in Europe no longer dominates or rules over the whole world), and that is why

such antagonisms' intensity has to abruptly fall, especially under the patronage (guardianship, tutelage) of the United States. In the imperialistic age, these antagonisms did not only prevent overall European expansion, but even intensified it, since every European Power wanted and took care to keep pace with expanding rivals (competitors). At the time of European world domination, the planet was grouped around the axes of inner-European (intra-European) antagonisms; now the European nations must be grouped, or rather team up (form an alliance, unite, merge), with regard to the planetary antagonisms. In Europe, in other words, until 1945, war was the illness (sickness, disease) of strength, and after 1945 it (i.e. war between great European Powers) was impossible because the continent was stricken with the illness (sickness, disease) of weakness. Since no European nation possesses the power and the will (volition) to bring about a historically viable unification of Europe under its own hegemonial administration and management, i.e. hegemony, then united Europe must, if at all, be built through the consensus of its two or three greater (larger) nations. In the course of this, i.e. on the road towards European union, it will be seen once more how much the business of trade differs from that of war and peace. Economic osmosis will not necessarily and obligatorily end up in political osmosis, especially if historically tired Europe, for reasons of convenience, decides to live under American hegemony. And the other way around: retrogressions (regressions, reversions) in the attempt at a tighter interweaving of European economies, given the overall European illness of weakness, does not at all necessarily lead to war. The alternative [[choice between]] (*or*: The dissociative solution) "monetary union or war", as Helmut Kohl and others have formulated it, may paedagogically be expedient, however its historical value is slight. Not only because just a short while ago in the former Yugoslavia and in the former Soviet Empire (Soviet Union), peoples pounced upon one another and tore one another to pieces (lacerated one another), [[peoples]] who had enjoyed for many decades the blessing(s) (boon,

benediction, godsend) of a common currency, but also because of the implication that in today's Europe there are no powers at all capable of, and willing to wage, war (*or*: but also because what is implied – that therefore today in Europe nations exist with the volition and the strength to wage war – is not valid).

The present-day dilemma of the continent [[of Europe]] is not (called), like before 1945, “unity or war”, but “unity or decline (fall, ruin, extinction)”. The great difference of these two things as [[compared]] to each other certainly only becomes recognisable if one does not confuse the logic of trade (commerce) and that (i.e. the logic) of war, at any level with each other. Still more generally, one would be well advised (*or*: it must be said that those interested would do well) not to leave world peace to the automatisms, i.e. automatic mechanisms, of the economy, but to seek world peace's prerequisites (preconditions, presuppositions) in the political balances of power (correlation of forces) of the world Powers.

---

## 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.**

---

<sup>i</sup> The German title in the *FAZ* was „Die falsche Rechnung“ (= “The false reckoning (bill, invoice, account, calculation)”).

<sup>ii</sup> It seems that the book in question was published under the title “The Great Illusion” in 1911, so perhaps P.K. should have written “three” rather than “two” years. The “two” years of the Greek text, I assume is a correction of the “Barely a year” of the German text. It’s not really important anyway, and P.K., given his workload, is entitled to – a very rare, I have to admit – “inaccuracy” – if it is an inaccuracy... (and I have no doubt there are or could be other such inaccuracies, but... I still haven’t been informed by anyone of any material or substantial error, anywhere in his work, ever!)

<sup>iii</sup> HAHAAHAHA!!!

<sup>iv</sup> This basically means that any kind of “peace theory”, i.e. any kind of utopian “crock of shit” is just that, BULLSHIT. War, like violence, is a constant (potentially to be manifested – always under the surface if not being actuated) phenomenon of human behaviour – like it or not! Study Clausewitz (*Theory of War* – Summary Notes), study *The Political and Man*, chapter. 3; and then if you have the guts: study *Power and Decision*.

<sup>v</sup> Let’s retrace Angell’s basic positions: 1) A nation cannot increase its power and prosperity through war and conquest. 2) Traditional power politics has been rendered useless by the “globalisation” of the 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century, incl. the internationalisation of finance and credit. 3) Great Britain and Germany could, nevertheless, impose order on India and the Ottoman region. 4) The case where one European Power wants to impose its will over all crucial regions was not examined. 5) Colonial expansion due to military expenditure was no longer viable; now was the time for economic-financial control of the colonies. 6) But 5) on its own does not prove that great Power war is not possible. 7) The progress in the globalisation of the day would however make war a non-starter (= contradicting 6), 3) and 4)). 8) If war is economically useless and globalisation renders war impossible, then all people should be against war as it is against everyone’s interests.