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Orthodox Christianity and War*

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Abstract

The subject of this article is the Orthodox Christianity's approach to war. Christians of other denomination have developed an elaborate theory of war, so-called "Just War Theory" (JWT), which has also been accepted by non-Christians and even secular thinkers regarding the nature and justification of war. A vast literature has been produced in a dire attempt to render perfect the world by insisting on the claim that war is the act of punishment for breaking the law. The result is an epistemological ease from which everything seems evident in advance including who is right and who at fault, who is and who is not favored by God. By removing from war an essential feature – that it is a form of conflict – JWT takes away the concept of reciprocity and introduces an in advance declared inequality which enables removal of uncertainty about the war's outcome. In Orthodox Christianity, the situation is different. With still live debate whether to persevere or abandon original Christian pacifism, for Orthodox Christianity, war is always a combination of cataclysm and temptation and far less Manichean than anything present in JWT. The aim of war is peace; but, however necessary, justice is an insufficient condition for justification. The difference between "justness" and "justification" is preserved through the uncertainty whom God, at war's end, loves more, because both victors and vanquished remain and continue to be in His grace. Losing a war, as such, does not turn the vanquished into criminals, nor does victory give the vanquisher the right of revenge for defending oneself. The latter approach

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to war has significant potentialities: preserving the distinction of *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello*, preserving reciprocity, mutual respect and trust, impossibility of incrimination of war *per se*, the possibility of honorable defeat, etc.

Keywords: Orthodox Christianity's approach to war, Just War Theory, justness, justification of war, right to victory, honorable defeat.

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Православие и война

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Аннотация

В статье исследуется существующий подход православия к войне. Христиане иной деноминации создали теорию справедливой войны (ТСВ), положения которой о природе и оправдании войны приняты и нехристианами, и даже светскими мыслителями. В отчаянных попытках представить мир совершенным издано большое количество литературных источников. Сторонники такой литературы настаивают на утверждении о том, что война – акт наказания за нарушение закона. Результатом является эпистемологическая легкость, с которой все заранее кажется очевидным, включая положения относительно того, кто прав, а кто виноват, кто пользуется, а кто не пользуется благосклонностью Бога. Исключая из категории войны важную особенность, характеризующую ее как форму конфликта, ТСВ тем самым исключает концепцию взаимности и вводит заранее заявленное неравенство, что позволяет устранить неопределенность в отношении исхода войны. В православии ситуация иная. В настоящее время продолжаются споры о том, следует ли оставаться на позициях первоначального христиан-

ского пацифизма или нужно от него отказаться, всегда ли для православного христианства война – это сочетание катаклизма и искушения. В православии нет той манихейской дихотомии, которая присутствует в ТСВ. Цель войны – мир. Но для ее оправдания справедливость – недостаточное условие, независимо от необходимости последней. Разница между «праведной» и «оправданной» войной сохраняется ввиду неопределенности, вызванной дилеммой. Возникает спорный вопрос о том, кого Бог любит больше по окончании войны – победителей или побежденных, учитывая, что и те, и другие пребывают в Его благодати. Проигрыш в войне как таковой не превращает побежденных в преступников. Победа не дает победителю права отомстить за самозащиту, и, соответственно, у этого подхода значительные преимущества: сохранение различия «права на ведение войны» (*ius ad bellum*) и «права во время войны» (*ius in bello*), сохранение взаимности, взаимного уважения и доверия, невозможность рассматривать ведение войны противником в качестве преступления, возможность почетного поражения.

Ключевые слова: отношение православия к войне, теория справедливой войны, праведность, оправдание войны, право на победу, достойное поражение.

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Introduction: Justice as the source and justification of war

Orthodox Christianity's relationship to war is a challenging and demanding topic. It is also badly neglected. What is the particularity of Orthodox Christianity's approach to war, and how does it differ from the approaches of other religions or ideologies? Christians of other denominations have developed elaborate and varied theories

of war, so-called "just war theories" that allow them, presumably, to better understand and justify this difficult phenomenon. Such theories, nurtured within the confines of Roman Catholic moral theology, have over time become accepted not only by other Christian groups, but also by non-Christian and even secular thinking[1] about the nature – above all, moral nature – and justification of war. A vast literature has been produced in a dire attempt to render perfect the world by insisting on the claim that war is the act of punishment for breaking the law. Therefore, within *ius ad bellum*, war does not carry the tragic responsibility for cardinal decisions that would otherwise imply guilt. The result is an epistemological ease from which everything seems evident in advance including who is at fault and who in the right, who is and is not favored by God.

The "just war theory" considers war as an activity that seeks justice. It thus removes the essential feature of war: that war is a form of conflict. Its designation is thereby cleansed of reciprocity, significantly reducing the domain of possible reasons for justification, indeed removing all the reasons grounded in *differences* that actually produce war as activity and phenomenon. The only reason allowed for justification of war is (re-)establishment of justice. However, wars are not carried out for justice, but emerge from conflicts of interest, and their resolution must be of such nature. The root of war lies in the freedom to have and act according to various interests; while justice, and especially injustice, even when they are an aspect of the true cause of war, do not account for it entirely. Freedom includes the possibility to choose evil, and as such it can produce injustice; yet, being an important parameter, justice, however, remains essentially an afterthought. Indeed, the criterion of justice rests on this sequence: the constitutive rule of the institution of war is victory, which does not take place either

[1] Of course, not only in thinking, but also in its normative articulation, international law.

necessarily or obviously, but is the result of activity that might actually fail. Although interests, which conflict precedes a war, pretend to have just grounding, they are *prima facie* not criminal intentions (else victory would not even be possible, but would be only a successful criminal act that issues from such intention). Otherwise, the difference between enemy and criminal would disappear, two sides would treat one another as criminals, and that would lead to total war that can only end in the complete destruction of one side. Such an approach obviates the possibility of an honorable defeat, and surrender would mean self-negation and acceptance of criminal intent. Defeat becomes an indicator of deceit and crime. Reduction of war to seeking justice turns it into a form of misunderstanding about authority and an instrument for the establishment and restoration of order.

In Orthodox Christianity, however, the situation is a bit different. There is a complex and incoherent assemblage of approaches focusing more on attempts to elaborate perseverance or abandonment of original Christian pacifism, always asking unanswered questions anew. It would appear that the attitude to war in Orthodox Christianity is cardinally different not only from the Roman Catholic one, but perhaps even more from the Protestant one, as well as all other positions, however many they are. It would also seem that in Orthodox Christianity's understanding of war, it is always a combination of cataclysm and temptation. Does this mean that Orthodox Christianity does not have a theory of war, or is it a matter of moral and ontological particularities that have something to do with the complexity of the phenomenon we refer to as "war?"

War as a conflict

War is a phenomenon that defies simple explanation and even more so, simple justifications. It is difficult to understand the very possibility of its existence. Still, it is one possibility among

all those which manifestation is part of the real world produced through human activity. It is a possibility that can come to pass at any given moment, and whether it does is a matter of any number of conditions. We can say that possibilities exist *a priori*, as God created them before the beginning of time, and that the set of all possibilities is the *a priori* unchangeable basis of the world. The possibilities are fixed and unmovable points of this basis, that is, their "existence" does not depend on any particular actualization of their factual execution in time. This set is greater than the set of mere natural possibilities, expanded by those resulting from freedom as the causal power to produce consequences partially independently to natural causality (although of course always in accordance with it). Thus, the set of all possibilities is the basis of the world and the demarcating line between the possible and impossible. Clearly, possibilities as such cannot be negated or "abolished." War is not mere natural possibility, such as the possibility of an earthquake; it falls within the domain of freedom, meaning that its reality necessarily involves a decision for it to take place. This is a general property of freedom: to produce something that would not be such had it not been thus decided, and that could have been decided differently. Of course, once a decision is made, it passes into the past becoming hard fact and necessarily such (otherwise, it would not have happened at all, irrespective of how unnecessary its possibility had been prior to the given decision).

It should be said that war is only one of many kinds of conflict. The existence of conflict is not difficult to understand. The possibility of conflict is a necessary consequence of the existence of freedom, which too must be assumed, since it cannot be imagined nor thought differently. Conflicts cannot be reduced to mere consequence of existence of changes, and differences that emerge as a result of changes, a process we otherwise observe as characteristic of every natural process: changes produce

differences. Conflicts are not mere collision, nor naturally necessary, but they are the result of the *reality* of freedom. Their essential characteristic is their possibility of *resolution*. It is possible to attempt to resolve a conflict, and this attempt may be successful or unsuccessful. Herein lies our problem: the possibility of there being no resolution to a conflict – at least through the means used conventionally . When we say that the "conventional" means for resolving conflict are "reasonable" or "peaceful" ones, it may happen that a conflict cannot be resolved in *this way*, that is, using *those* means. Then, either there is an acceptance (as we are still in the domain of freedom) of conflict to remain unresolved (and thus *acceptance* of defeat in *advance*, which is contradictory and normatively impossible)[2] or there is a *decision* for it to be resolved using *other means.* Here is the core of the definition of war: *unacceptance* of the lack of resolution to a conflict that cannot be resolved "peacefully." This places war unequivocally in the domain of freedom and responsibility and makes it one institution among many in the social and political articulation of life, overwhelmingly collective and inter-collective. War is a civilizational legacy.

The attitude to war differs from civilization to civilization. This attitude encapsulates a given civilization's overall understanding of the world, its structure, means of its functioning, and, ultimately, its values. If the overall understanding is designated with the word "tradition," we can say that various religious and secular traditions, while containing similarities, have differing attitudes to war. These differences have been largely examined,

[2] Cf. Chapter Eight "Ispravno i nužno" ("Righteousness and Necessity") in my book Ogledi o odbrani ("Essays on Defense") [Babić 2018]; it is normatively impossible to accept in advance the option not even to attempt to resolve a conflict: in such a case there would not be any conflict anymore, as one of the "conflicting" positions would be fictitious. From this follows, among other things, that defense is a (legal and constitutional) obligation without which the government would not be authorized to enforce their own laws.

which a cursory glance at the literature on this topic confirms. What can be noticed in this literature, in which the attitude to war, usually expressed in the form of just war theory, is analyzed in the context of differing worldviews – the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, but also liberal, conservative, communist, communitarian, feminist, European, extra-European, etc. – is the absence of analysis of Orthodox Christianity's attitude to war[3]. Does this mean that this attitude is so mystical that it is better left aside or indeterminate to the point of elusiveness?

Original pacifism, and the search for its replacement

As we know, the Christian faith began its social life from a pacifist standpoint, negating any justification not only of war but coercion in resolving human problems, negating the very essence or importance of conflict. Among (early) Christians there was no conflict, while real conflicts with others were considered insignificant. However, when they came to power, in a state that was no minor (self-sufficient) kingdom, but a world empire, they faced a novel problem, one that could not be ignored. They now held responsibility for this world, its fate, structure, articulation of its values, and what is more, responsibility for the implementation of laws and their defense, both external and internal. It was this realization that showed that pacifism cannot preserve and save their or any world from cataclysm. The previous, enormous political power of pacifism (which brought Christianity to power) was not an adequate means for the defense of the Empire.

It would appear that the realization of the complete instrumental impotence of pacifism for either defense or construction leads to the articulation of a standpoint or particular "theory." Namely, it

[3] Cf. "Christian theologians generally agree that the Orthodox Church does not share a Just War theory in the Western sense, drafted from the perspective of the decretist principles of jus ad bellum and jus in bello" [Simion 2011, 23].

was at once to preserve the essential property of pacifism, the perseverance of the pursuit of *justice* at all cost, but allowing for a connection with force that would ensure adequate instrumentality. Pacifism's previous potential to mobilize the power of passive resistance, drawing strength from a perspective outside time in which the value of worldly life was inexistent or minimal, vanished in the face of the need to introduce order to collective life: this meant (at least the need for) rule within time, predictability, laws, policy. Responsibility to the state demanded a different attitude, and thus absolute indifference to worldly power was replaced by absolute imperial justice. Collective freedom is more restrictive than individual, and its defense necessarily demands a different, institutional, articulation of power.

This is the origin of Just War Theory – *it is a derivation of pacifism*. Or, as Michael Walzer points out in his recent text, this theory originates in the service of imperial force, when a God-fearing Christian became an imperial soldier (one who is uncannily similar to a policeman, imperial, and "worldly", but certainly closer to policeman than soldier) [Walzer 2002]. The new soldier was in a legitimate and blessed service of defending peace, abandoning, in every practical relevant sense, the previous radical refusal to use any force in relation to people. What was thus necessary was a theory that preserves the purity of the pacifist position; and it was discovered in the absolutization of justice based on the assumption of perfection of some idealized *status quo ante*. The defense of *that* assumed previous state became the source of legitimacy for what was previously thought impossible to legitimize – the use of force. The price for this was huge.

Indeed, the price was the implicit abandonment, rejection really, of what was most valuable in Christianity – moral and practical universality necessary for the two most important things. First, moral equality among all people is impossible without overall equal access to opportunities as resourses created in the world by

the Christian God for all (and not only some): reason is present in all thinking beings, all thinking beings are free, everyone who is free has will and can set goals, attempt to reach them, and be happy when they do so. The second part of the price paid was freedom itself, necessarily connected with power of thought and possession of reason, freedom to set goals in the first place, and then achieve them through means that are the causes having those goals as consequences.

The presupposition of perfection, even if entirely imaginary, of the state of affairs prior to attack, disruption of which is the justification of force in Just War Theory, excludes both relevant equality and true freedom surreptitiously introducing a substitute for the concept of the chosen people. Herein lies the greatest danger of "Just War Theory": the tendency of its conceptual capacity renders it exclusionary, crusading, and unconditional, splitting humanity into two: an exceptional part entitled or authorized to interpret good and evil and the other part, axiologically and morally lower, thus potentially subject to appropriate treatment. The division renders one group being those whose opinions matter and count, and the other being those whose interests and desires, should they come up, are simply less important or entirely invalid.

Yet, this framework of assumed inequality enabled Christians (at least in the West) to preserve an essential strand of initial pacifism, still allowing them to conduct politics (and defense of peace). The pacifist black-and-white image was thus preserved. Leaving aside whether such Manicheanism is implicit or perhaps latent, present from the beginning, always already within pacifism, yet, by replacing pacifism with active service of Christian soldiers, Manicheanism acquired a constitutive function. Established inequality ensures that the righteous side always wins, for such is its destiny. There is no uncertainty about who will carry the day. It is considered impossible for the righteous side to lose the war, since God is its high commander. All difference between (national, state) defense,

and defense of a worldview, such as Christianity, is spun around and lost.

This theory, having withstood time and become established also in the secular world, indicates two interesting things: (1) religious pillars still provide the structure of the world (the *a priori* set of all possibilities, that is, the assumed precise demarcation between the ultimately possible and impossible), and (2) Manicheanism has preserved its boundless lure to this very day[4].

In the real world, there is freedom (to whatever degree) and agency of all who possess will, including the unjust side (which notion implies the massive and pretentious metaphysics of rationalization of how Other, who is Evil, can still have any reasonable and motivational power while ultimately "not being right"); such approach necessarily implies not only supremacy but even *omnipotence*, against which evil hopelessly sets impossible goals. In war, this carries far-reaching significance and has cardinal implications. The most significant is *hubris*, the very basis of Manicheanism: it negates the virtues of being God-fearing and humble as well as the readiness to accept the truth as something independent of us. Truth, being subject to interpretation, becomes the property of those who are, or believe themselves to be, omnipotent and thus will not hesitate to interpret it arbitrarily. *Hubris* and arbitrariness go hand in hand.

The Mosaic of Orthodox Christianity

But what of Orthodox Christianity? The essence of its position is not easy to comprehend: in Orthodox Christianity universality is guarded through location and diversity. Universality is not substantive, but rather methodological and fragmentary, broken

[4] A simple thought experiment will show this: if we replace the word "Christian" with "democratic," or some other legitimizing concept – until recently a large portion of the world used the term "socialist," – the same Manichean pattern recurs.

into distinct collective persons as forms of actualized life, similar to the way in which an individual preserves the universality of mind[5]. There is neither in Orthodox Christianity, as in Roman Catholicism, a broad, accommodating yet winding, *path of salvation* (from which one can swerve and tangentially fall into hell), nor, as in Protestantism, a *labyrinth* of narrow interwoven individual pathways, weaving aggregated individual successes into a cumulative maximization of progressive well-being. Rather it is more of a *mosaic* to be laid out "in a specific order." Only as such is it beautiful and makes life beautiful, that is, it is optimal, not maximal (in any senses of the word: maximum happiness or any other unreachable goal). This "order," in a political sense, is more of a harmony and confederacy of interests than a leveling and refined space of utter commensurability that would allow for universal control. It thus has no need for Crusades or colonial logic, nor indeed Manicheanism. While perhaps implicit, neither tolerance nor what Christians call "love" is merely declarative. It would appear that implicitness is an essential characteristic of Orthodox Christianity: it is what preserves private values as well as the integrity of anything that holds absolute value, such as individual persons and their institutions.

When it comes to the relation to war, the question is whether Orthodox Christianity has overcome the initial pacifism of the New Testament or whether it has preserved it, directly or in some distilled fashion (like Roman Catholicism has through Just War Theory)? The question remains the source of real and relevant debate. Still, in a practical sense, it would appear that the answer to the question whether it is right to oppose evil

[5] Personhood, which is singular, has a universal, not particular value (it is beyond and "above" any price, and for that matter does not allow commensurability). Each individual person, however many there are, is uniquely universal, despite there being only one mind.

with force[6] is affirmative, but with stricter limitations than those applied by the two Roman Catholic theories of war and force, namely, Just War Theory and the theory of double effect[7]. The axiological status of war includes a significant cataclysmic dimension; indeed, it is an integral part of the Orthodox Christian attitude to war[8]. The axiological status of the use of force is nevertheless incorporated in the dialectical relation between justification of aims and corresponding means. This allows the consolidation of difference between defense from dangers and threats to the world, that is, one's own concrete, real, actual world as the expression of real life, – and the essential religious need for overcoming evil. On the one hand, we have reality of responsibility for the happiness and freedom of oneself and others as interest and duty; on the other, a normative ideal of holiness as a calling or even challenge.

To whom belongs the victory?

Perhaps this is best seen in the Orthodox Christian attitude toward victory. An Orthodox Christian soldier must fight honorably and in accordance with the rules of war, trusting and struggling for victory. Yet the soldier places victory itself in God's

[6] Ivan Ilyin has an important study on this, cf. his On Resistance to Evil by Force [Ilyin 1925].

[7] The "theory of double effect" grounds moral justification of acts or practices in good intentions, which allows for bad consequences to be disregarded relatively easily as "collateral damage." (St. Thomas stated: "Nothing hinders one act from having two effects, only one of which is intended, while the other is beside the intention. Now moral acts take their species according to what is intended, and not according to what is beside the intention, since this is accidental," S.Th., II–II, q. 64, a. 7 [St. Thomas Aquinas 1918, 209]). It is a comfortable theory for those who have to make difficult decisions, as it significantly narrows the scope of their responsibility, an, if they are intelligent and decisive, allows for greater efficiency in what is being done.

[8] Tolstoy describes this dimension in War and Peace, specifically in Book IV. There he does not succumb to his ideology of strict pacifism, as he does in his pamphlet writings.

hands: it is the Creator who ultimately decides who wins (see: [Grozdić, Kajtez, & Gostović 2016]). Since God's providence is axiomatically infinite, there is neither certainty who will win nor who is God's favorite; which turns any assumption about the necessity of victory into an act of *hubris* and usurpation of authority, including the authority to punish. In the words of Immanuel Kant, war must never be "punitive" [Kant 1991, 153].

On the other hand, there is also no certainty about who honors God more, given the Devil's cunning to smuggle *hubris*, egotism, and bias into irresistible ideological and theoretical constructs, which would then hide deeply the aspects of evil. This possibility of evil hiding itself under a cloak of self-delusion, self-aggrandizement, and egotism is important. We should add to it that violence is not always easily distinguished from legitimate coercion and could thus ensure efficient and massive collaboration with various novel forms of evil, even undisguised. This landscape is further complicated with powerful manipulation techniques (one of which is intentional or inadvertent false naming, another is widespread naming of new evils by old names) (see: [Babić 2004, 241 ff.]) – the temptation to succumb to erroneous beliefs and poor solutions grows. Conviction of the necessity of victory implies a blasphemous assumption of omnipotence, which in turn implies that conflict is superfluous, turning the attitude to the enemy into contempt and then unarticulated and unfounded hatred. Impatience and exclusion become seductive and irresistible, further narrowing the domain of predictability and furthering uncertainty.

Finally, the terms "will," effort," "striving for the goal" constitutively include uncertainty, that is, the possibility of failure – and any negation of this moment would reduce the action of fighting to mechanical execution, substituting freedom of choice with necessity of natural determinism. Indeed, this would result in the entire endeavor.

The position according to which victory is in God's hands obviates all these, essentially Manichean, traps. Victory is important, naturally, it is why war is conducted in the first place, and the absence of *this* assumption implies irresponsibility and a lack of earnestness. Lack of earnestness means the negation of the order of life and its social structure, lawfulness; while irresoluteness and irresponsibility negate the potential constituting of long-term meaning of life. Yet facing the *possibility* of defeat – should God so decide – can be experienced as something truly unbearable, in particular in moments of such importance as are life, personal or national defense. The temptation of pacifism appears enticing, such that weak and erring men fatalistically relinquish *the entire endeavor* to God, refusing to react to any kind of evil or come to their own defense, or to that of their country. Indeed, this would be ceding all control over one's future, which should be the result of freely made plans and laws (but not adopted or imposed externally). In doing so, in giving up, one is not only accepting defeat, but the necessity of evil.

Whatever power is in human hands, integrated into freedom, it is necessarily limited in multiple ways. It is limited by natural environment, by other people (the issue of cooperation and its avoidance due to the cost), which cuts freedom down to a fraction of the imaginable or desired. To which we can add the limits that issue from temptation and uncertainty each person carries within themselves. Still, the pacifist implied strategy is that even this sliver of freedom and the power it carries – the domain of life – ought to be given over to the chance: neglect and lack of concern for oneself mean relinquishing responsibility for one's actions. This includes abandoning defense as the single legitimate reason for justifying war. (Note that justification for war does not make war just; it maintains its tragic and cataclysmic nature, which could never be preserved if wars were ever "just" since just victory would ultimately remedy everything.) Nevertheless, it could still be justified as a defense of

those values that allow for the potential constituting of long-term meaning of life. The distinction between *justice* and *justification* is significant, as the former is maximalist, whereas the latter seeks the optimum from a given situation, operating with a framework that limits and at the same time also safeguards all values from corruption.

Justification does not imply justice, but necessity and compulsion, in this case, a tragic path with no innocent exit, but which also avoids *the absurdity of mere arbitrariness*. I think this is a crucial point: if God decides against awarding victory to the one who has done everything in their power to win (no ground for blaming oneself for defeat), the result is tragic – as any defeat (as opposed to failure) is indeed tragic. Yet defeat is not taken to be absurd in the meaning pacifist fatalism or the result of pure chance would give it. The tragic is not, or does not have to be, absurd, just as death is not. Acceptance of the possibility of defeat guards from lapsing into this absurd position. Hence the importance of the thesis of victory being in God's hands. It spares one from black and white, a strategy of all or nothing, which prevents forgiveness, both of others and of oneself, and renders defeat unforgivable and absolutely unacceptable even when we have done everything in "our" power to avoid defeat and achieve victory. Unforgiveness, of course, also negates respect for both oneself and adversary; it prevents or rather, given that life does not stop, renders difficult the establishment of peace, or a new legal framework, or a new living arrangement.

War must be allowed to finish and be buried thereupon, at least morally, as Max Weber says in one of his texts [Weber 2009, 118]. This is preferable for a society created by war (either by victory or defeat) to avoid a future equally anomic and terrible as its past. War is a state of affairs that seeks to resolve itself, truly resolve itself in a new norm, and should not be a means of persevering in preserving the perfection and holiness of prior normative states (which clearly

did not suit at least one side in the conflict). Nor should it be used to pursue and punish those guilty of breaching that previous perfection, in the hopes of thus proving its "justness"[9].

There can be no certainty which side will win in war. Conversely, assuming that victory is a matter of mere arbitrariness and chance renders meaningless the value and effort in achieving it, that is, doing everything in our power to reach victory. Neither losing the war makes us criminals, nor winning gives us the right of revenge against someone for daring to oppose us. For God could have decided differently. In a strong sense, God has not abandoned those who were defeated. The same laws, both moral and natural, still apply equally to all. Those laws demand respect of the truth and respect of the world and its God – without this, there is no self-respect as the premise of one's own moral value and dignity that are worth another's respect.

Conclusion

Orthodox Christianity thus avoids the Manichean trap of splitting the world into purely good and purely evil halves. Such a world would necessarily be mechanical, reducing freedom to happiness or some other comfort containing values grounded in mere illusion of freedom. It would be a world in which all values have a price, that is, without absolute values above all cost. What would, in that

[9] Justice implies normative necessity, not only a justification of punishment. Yet, ths will not make war just. Punishment, as a principle after the fact, refers to what was irresponsibly and incorrectly done, which does not play a big part of the overall justification of war (either war as such or some specific war). The ultimate general justification (or lack thereof) of war has only very little to do with justice. But insisting on justice can, as Weber shows in the same text as quoted above, replace reconciliation with humiliation (and resulting defense from humiliation): "A nation forgives if its interests have been damaged, but no nation forgives if its honor has been offended, especially by bigoted self-righteousness. Every new document that comes to light after decades revives the undignified lamentations, the hatred and scorn, instead of allowing the war at its end to be buried, at least morally" [Weber 2009, 118]. Damage to interest is amendable and therefore forgivable. Humiliation, on the other hand, is not, and therefore it is unforgivable.

case, be the distinction between defending the world from evil (an act of defense from evil) and "ultimate overcoming" of evil? In actuality, the latter is impossible since evil is not only one possibility latently ever present in the world and in everything we do but also a constitutive aspect of freedom: the possibility of choice of evil is the condition of freedom. A normative ideal of universal holiness is not the ground for articulation of action, correct or otherwise, based on which it would be possible to establish responsibility (guilt and merit) for one's own or another's freedom. This means that "war against war," a war of which the goal would be the abolishing of all future war, abolishing the very possibility of war, would presume not only the absence of all interest, but the absence of freedom and of concrete, real persons physically and epistemologically determined in time and space. Such a notion contains no people, no real communities as forms of long-term life, no society, no tradition, no investment in goals that form the basis of any activity; instead, there only exists, perhaps, taking lots of pleasure in egotism and evil to the point of boredom and meaninglessness.

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