War and Democracy
(Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989)

In his review of *The Death of the State* (1974), Maurice Cranston wondered whether the title was a wish or a prophecy. It was surely not prophecy. But this book left unexamined both the conditions that generated the modern state and the reasons for its continued reproduction. *War and Democracy* picks up a piece of this.

From the Jacket:

"There was a time when no one who had to fight a war was excluded from the decision to go to war. Citizens ruled and only citizens fought and died. Today, people who have had no say in the making of war face the enemy. Worse, today, entire populations who had not the slightest say in the decision to go to war may be subject to enormous suffering and sacrifice. A main task of this book is to explain this in the only way possible, historically."

Excerpted Reviews

Krishna Kumar, University of Kent, pre-publication review.

"Manicas could hardly have chosen a more important set of themes. But it is the treatment that is so impressive. In the few areas where I can claim some knowledge—civil conflict in the ancient world, the French Revolutionary wars—I am struck again and again at the basic soundness of the judgments and the refreshing quality of the approach. Manicas has made good use of his published sources but he never shrinks from challenging the view of even the most respected scholars in their field and, what is more, is generally highly persuasive when he disagrees…"

"Given the wide span of time and topics, his confident assertions are likely to encounter a good deal of opposition from specialists. I think though that most readers will feel that he has not been unduly dogmatic, and that his conclusions are reasonably based on the evidence. This is in fact one of the main strengths of the work, that interpretation of ideas and intentions is referred so scrupulously to the relevant texts and the actual events of the time. This mixing of theory and history is always attractive and especially so when it so commandingly done."

"In short this will I hope turn out to be a major contribution to the new wave of historical sociology associated with Skocpol, Mann, Hall and others. If this book does not make a considerable impact it will be a bad reflection on the intellectual life in this country"

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Martin O. Heisler, University of Maryland, *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 85 (September 1991). The full review is available on-line:
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28199109%2985%3A3%3C1078%3A%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R

“Some of the troubling concerns that will linger longer after U.S. Forces return from the Persian Gulf will be in the realm of political theory…And like the expansion of commitments in Vietnam, it raises anew questions about how an ostensible democracy makes a collective choice for war…”

“There is much indirect help in this sweeping, extraordinarily erudite exemplar of purposive historical scholarship. By tracing the links between the evolution of the conduct of war and the theory and practice of democratic governments (generally viewed), Manicas shows how those questions were answered by major political philosophers and in politics from ancient Greece to the United States in World War II…Ending his analysis when he does, he avoids critical problems for connecting war and democracy arising from the juxtaposition of modern (particularly nuclear) warfare and (at least in larger polities) the attenuation of democracy through tenuous representation…”

“Manicas provides valuable, if indirect, clues to what is missing or no longer feasible now.”

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Bob Jones, *Midweek.* 6 February 1991

> “‘A strict observance of the written laws is doubtless one of the high duties of a good citizen, but it is not the highest. The laws of necessity, of self-preservation, of saving the country when in danger are of higher obligation. To lose our country by a scrupulous adherence to written laws would be to lose the law itself…thus absurdly sacrificing the end to the means…It is incumbent on those only who accept great charges to risk themselves on great occasions when the safety of the nation or some of its very high interests are at stake.’”

“Those words, written in a letter shortly after he had stepped down as president of the United States, are from that paragon of American democratic values, Thomas Jefferson. And, as the historian who has uncovered them says in a following note, no modern chief executive has rejected this Machiavellian imperative. Anti-democracy and war have been its consequences. So far, at least, humanity has survived this. Whether in the era of nuclear war, it will continue to do so remains to be seen.”

“….When George Bush made the decision to oust Iraq from Kuwait, he cited an American view of the Kuwaiti’s right to democracy and freedom. From the Arab point of view, while they may admire many of our material things, America is seen less as a democracy and more as a Christian, colonial powerhouse…Was George Bush pushed into war by forces beyond his control and by a people not clearly seeing the American duty?… Athenians made a conscious choice to battle Sparta. Americans may not have made quite so conscious a choice to enter the Great War of 1917.”

“War and Democracy is tough reading and Manicas may be a better researcher than a communicator in print. But you’ll come away struck by the conclusion that the

blight of war will not end until somebody takes the crossroad that leads to a better form of democracy."

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Elliot Bartky, *Review of Politics*

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"In *War and Democracy* Peter Manicas returns to an 'older view' of political philosophy in which war and stasis (civil disorder) are thought to pose the primary threats to the establishment of a just political order. Manicas rightly regards Plato as the source of the view that a just 'constitution' cannot be discussed intelligently apart from …consideration of war' (p. 7). In placing the Platonic problem in the context of what he calls 'critical junctures in the development of the relations of war and democracy'—especially ancient Greece, and the American, French and Russian revolutions—Manicas offers a new reading of the relationship between war and politics (p. 2)."

"Manicas admits that his contextual, or, as he puts it, concrete approach to political thought is likely to disturb both historians and philosophers. This is because, in restoring the problem which Plato first raised, the motivation and method of the book are neither readily acceptable as intellectual history, nor as philosophy. Manicas's approach to history and political thought is guided by an argument in behalf of democracy, by a view of history that contingent, that is, history is 'the outcome of both accident and will' (p. 4). These two positions are used to support his argument that every failure of democracy is, contrary to Plato's account of the necessary limitations of democracy, the result of accident and choice."

"…Whatever argument one might find either with his historical examples, or with his interpretation of texts, is not as significant as the problematic assumptions of his method …."

"Given his refusal to consider the limits and possibilities of democracy, we are justified in asking why Manicas sought to return to Plato. It appears that the return to the Platonic problem is necessary, not for what we may learn from Plato, but to show that the threat of war has always undermined any true test of mankind's ability to establish a just democratic order. The book is, in large part, an attempt to refute the Platonic bias by demonstrating that the problem of democracy cannot be solved until there is a solution to the problem of war, and that the problem of war cannot be solved "until mankind takes some significant steps in the direction of greater democracy' (p. 3). It appears to be Manicas's position, then, that freedom from the burdens of the Platonic legacy, even if it means ignoring what that legacy entailed, is a step toward enacting the democratic solution. Yet without attending to the possibilities and limits of democracy, without in the first place attending to Plato's argument, it is doubtful that freedom will become anything more than an abstract wish."

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John Ryder, SUNY College at Cortland, Newsletter, No. 66, Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, October 1993.

Some issues are so important that we rarely get around to thinking much about them. The relation of war and democracy, including the many puzzles theoretical and practical generated by their relation, is surely such an issue. Peter Manicas has done us all a great service by turning his talents to this theme, and he has done so in a way which will resonate with those of us who tend to think in the grain of American traditions. One of the enduring characteristics of classical American thought has been the idea that the reconstruction in and of philosophic categories and analysis. Manicas endorses this Deweyan historicism, and therefore takes a methodological approach to the relation of war and democracy which is no doubt shocking to many philosophers, and probably to more than a few historians and political scientists. The philosopher must adjust to the notion that the theoretical questions about war and democracy cannot be approached outside a consideration of the historical development of the two, and the ways their mutual relations have influenced each. The social scientist may be equally unsettled by the idea that history raises questions which demand philosophic consideration, so that a history void of philosophy is as flawed as a philosophy that knows no history. If the proof is in the eating, so to speak, then War and Democracy makes a powerful case for the necessary interrelation of history, sociology, political theory and philosophy.

The book is prompted by the necessity of democracy and the ubiquity of war. By the "necessity of democracy" I mean the fact that no serious consideration of political matters over the past few hundred years, and certainly for the present and future, can avoid democracy. Whether regarded as a means or an end, whether feared or admired, whether a threat or an aspiration, democracy touches everything social. The difficulty is that like every great human product, this one raised as many problems as it may solve: is democracy direct or representative; does it require a small scale or may it be large; what is its relation to republics, to justice, to rights; what may we make a bourgeois democracy, liberal democracy, socialist democracy? As if these concerns are not sufficiently intractable, there is the fact that the historical course of the development of democracy has intersected war at nearly every turn: dynastic wars and imperial wars, colonial wars, revolutionary wars and civil wars, limited war and absolute war, defensive wars and wars of aggression, local wars and world wars, hot wars, cold wars and star wars. The task Manicas poses for himself is to understand something as significant and powerful as democracy in its relation to something as persistent and complex as war.

The primary aim of the book is to attempt to understand the current situation with respect to democracy, democratic aspirations, and wars of all kinds. Manicas announces his conclusion early on, and it is that despite the complexities, and with possible exceptions, war and democracy are incompatible: "It may well be that the problem of -democracy', construed as an ideal, cannot be solved until there is a solution to the problem of war, and conversely, that the human blight of war will not be eliminable until mankind takes some significant steps in the direction of greater democracy." (P.l) In the process of elucidating and de- fending the thesis Manicas articulates a number of provocative, if not entirely original, propositions. One of them concerns the drafting of the US Constitution, at the time of which, he argues, conditions prevailed which made

possible the development of institutions which would have been far more democratic than the Constitution, which is distinctly anti-democratic in its spirit and many of its provision. Manicas also argues for the deeply democratic character of Marx and of Lenin, despite the anti-democratic nature of the Stalinist directions in which the Soviet Union and Bolshevism went. And in yet another intriguing remark, Manicas suggests that with respect to the development of democracy in the 20th century, there if far too little appreciation of the significance of World War I. This is an especially prescient point, considering the fact that since this book was published in 1989, the European political order has unraveled, and we now see wars in the Balkans, deadly struggles between Christians and Muslims, German unification, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and most recently the split of Czechoslovakia into two nations. We are, I would suggest, still working out the results of World War I, which is to say we have yet to solve the problems generated by the collapse of the Hohenzollern, Hapsburg, Romonov and Ottoman Empires.

Though Manicas is interested primarily in war and democracy today, he takes us to ancient Greece to begin the story of their relation. Athenian democracy, he argues, is tied to hoplite war- fare in that the military was in the fullest sense a citizen army, despite the fact that most residents were not citizens. Even in decidedly undemocratic Sparta, the decision to go to war required consent of the fighters. Though there is no direct consideration of the Roman legions in their connection to the Republic or the Empire, there is an indirect account of Rome through its influence on early modern political thinkers. It was Machiavelli who argued that a modern republic must be expansionist, and that this required a large population and an army of the Roman rather than Greek type, which is to say an army which is into coincident with rule of th polity. The "Citizen army," then, changes its meaning from that in the Greek polis, and in its new manifestation raised the problem of how to compel a sufficient number of individuals to serve. For Machavelli this required men of virtue, and in any case this is still an issue in our time, as is the question of the relation between patriotism, a draft and democracy. After an account of Montesquieu's treatment of the nature of a republic, Manicas moves to the modern period, in four chapters which deal with the American situation from the Revolution through Jefferson's Presidency. In the American Revolution the citizen-soldier reemerges as the colonists fight to free themselves, a situation which makes of ideology an important factor in war. There is first the question of how, in an atmosphere of democratic principles, it is possible to maintain an effective military force, and on the other side of the coin there is the role of democratic ideology which can play in mobilizing a citizenry. One of the crucial questions Manicas raises, and another which is still with us, concerns the character of the U.S. Constitution. The Articles of Confederation; he argues, had endorsed a kind of localism, and by thus making' direct participation in government more possible, it had a democratic character, much of which was undermined by the 1787 Constitution. Manicas' sense of all this is that the Founders were wrong to insist that a stable, large nation is inconsistent with the democratic localism more prominent in the Articles. For Manicas, the Deweyan sense of democracy as the expansion of the Community (not necessarily the national is consistent with, indeed requires, local democratic structures and power. Thus we have the problem of nationalism and democracy, which was encountered early in us history with the Alien and

Sedition Acts, and continues to haunt us. Even Jefferson, who Manicas argued never gave up a conception of the nation as a confederation of local entities even during his Presidency, nevertheless accepted the Machiavellian imperative to preserve the nation. For Manicas, "antidemocracyand war have been its consequence."

As significant as the American Revolution was, it was the French Revolution was, it was the French Revolution and the wars which followed and changed everything. With respect to democracy, the radical program of the Revolution established what we might now call Social Democracy as its end. This has been so powerful that it is possible to say, Manicas argues, that ever since and for the foreseeable future, there are only two "parties" in the world -- those who wish to complete or at least advance the radical program of the Revolution (Marxists, socialists, anarchists, etc.), and those who hold that something like an American-style democracy is as far as one can go in this direction. (p. 195). With respect to war, as Clausewitz saw clearly, the wars following the revolution approached absolute war, involving entire populations. Paradoxically this is due both to the fact that the radical ideology of the revolution gave the French populace a more direct stage in the wars, and to the fact that elsewhere in Europe the threat from France was so great that entire populations had to be mobilized to respond. Prior to these wars it has been possible for Kant to pin his hopes for perpetual peace on the supposition that republics would likely be peaceful because peace would be in the interest of the citizenry. The Napoleonic Wars made it more difficult to hold such a view, and the problem may have to do with the relation of national interests to the interests of the populace. For Manicas, one of the fundamental traits of the modern situation, at the same time one of its flaws, is the assumption by all modern nation- states that the interests of the nation are shared by the populace. In the absence of a much more radical democracy, Manicas argues, there is no good reason to make this assumption.

This is an issue with which Marx, and later Lenin, dealt directly. In the essentially democratic program of the Communist Manifesto Marx pushed beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy, in which, as Manicas paraphrases Marx, "one had the right to choose among one's exploiters, the right to own what one could never afford, the right to say what one pleased unless it threatened the status quo, and the right to vote for candidates who represented the interests of the rich and powerful." (pp. 236-37) .The other crucial question ,concerning Marx has to do with the role of war in the transition. to a more socialist democracy. Manicas argues that though Marx thought that revolution is likely to be violent, he also thought that modern war is in general not in the democratic interests of the populace. The experience of 1848 was important here, but even more compelling was the Franco-Prussian War and the fate of the Paris Commune.
In the 20th century the tension between war and mass democracy, and the tension between very different democratic visions, becomes more severe. If for Marx and Engles war was likely to inhibit progress towards democracy, by 1917 Woodrow Wilson was ready to fight a war to make the world safe for democracy. One of the great consequences of World War I was the Russian Revolution, which Manicas regards as democratic, or at least as having democratic possibilities. He argues that Lenin's political concepts as developed in State and Revolution aspired to an "anti-statist -- anarchistic --decentralized association of soviets," and was to that extent democratic. (p. 273) .But following Marx's

sense of the danger of war for socialism, Lenin's program had no chance of success, largely because of the continuation of war in Europe, the allied intervention in Russia, and the Civil War.

One of the themes Manicas develops is that not only is war dangerous to democracy, but the absence of democracy is conducive to war. The democratic possibilities in Europe after the war failed, and in so doing set the stage for he Second World War: the Spanish republic eventually collapsed under the weight of fascism, Bolshevik democracy never materialized in Russia an the Soviet Union, having given way to Stalinism, but worse still was the failure of the revolution in Germany in 1918-19. The defeat of the radical democratic program of Rosa Luxemburg, the USPD, and whatever left-wing might still have been left of the SPD, set the stage for the Weimar republic an the rise of Nazism.

There is, finally, the issue of American democracy. The most prominent American theoretician of democracy has been Dewey, with the more radical side of whom Manicas would identify. Dewey of course had supported World War I, having regarded it to be a struggle of democratic peoples fighting for "our democracy and civilization." Manicas argues, though, that the experience of the war, and the political processes which followed it in Europe and here, for example repression during and after the war, transformed Dewey's conception of democracy into something much more radical than it had been. Manicas contrasts Dewey's writings on democracy and political theory with Lippmann's who, as he puts it, "was not transformed." Dewey's radicalization would be, in any case, an extension of his earlier conceptions, for example in Democracy and Education, since even there democracy and the "method of intelligence" require each other, and war cannot for very long be conducive to the method of intelligence. Dewey had also argued earlier that nations themselves are barriers to democracy in that they construct limits to the outward push of community; in place of the vital growth of an equitable community they require, a la Machiavelli, the expansionist pursuit of national interests.

Manicas ends his analysis with a short Epilogue which treats the Second World War and the Cold War. It is as if no extended consideration of those two events is necessary, at least not in this context. The point has been driven home: war is a threat to democracy. In the late 1980s Manicas was writing in the context of the Cold War, which no less than all the hot ones impeded democracy at every turn. If we look at the American case alone, the Cold War helped to bring about the National Security State and the Imperial Presidency, neither particularly conducive to democracy. And abroad, the Cold War justified any and every anti-democratic action the CIA, State Department, Pentagon and White House wanted, from Iran and Guatemala in the early 1950s through Southeast Asia, the Dominican Republic and Brazil in the 1960s, to Central America in the 1980s. In any case, Manicas has written a fine book, one in which there is a good deal to think about and from which there is a good deal to learn. Anyone with a clear sense of the boundaries between history, political science and philosophy may find the book unsatisfying, but then anyone with a clear sense of the boundaries between history, political science and philosophy has an unsatisfying position to begin with.

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Manicas is grateful to Ryder for his generous and accurate summary of the book and to Bartky who evidently understood the book, even if in contrast to Kumar and Ryder, he found the approach unhelpful. Manicas thanks also Heisler who is more optimistic about the possibilities of democracy in a nuclear age. As this is written, of course, the President of the United States is considering, without a Declaration of war, and in violation of signed treaties, a "first strike" against a nation on grounds that " a regime change" is required. Contrary to Kumar, the book made little impact: Evidently, it was easier for most "specialists" to simply ignore its arguments, perhaps reflecting, as Kumar suggests, on the "intellectual life" of English-speaking academics.

Following is an Excerpt from Chapter 12 of ***War and Democracy***

A Historiographical Problem

Some commentators have argued that the Ebert government had no choice, that "the Spartacist tactics of revolt was a policy of catastrophe which drove the Majority Socialists into the arms of reactionary militarists."[73] This view is not patent nonsense, even if it is nearly so. It is certainly false that it was the Spartacists who "began a policy of strikes, riots, street fighting, insurrections"; although it is true that "the danger from the left [was] the severest and most critical problem for the new revolutionary regime."[74]

The strikes and insurrections *were* a problem for the new regime, but that was because the new regime was not revolutionary, and because once that was seen--indeed, once the regime began counterrevolutionary activity, people responded with demonstrations, strikes, and street fighting.[75]

Others have argued, more plausibly, that "the radical wing of the SPD" --presumably the Spartacists and the USPD --did not acknowledge "the strength of Germany's anti-socialist forces, conservative, liberal, and catholic -and the probable reaction of the other European powers."[76] Of course, this last remains an unknown; and much depends on just how some possible "third way" might have been perceived by the other European powers and, as in Russia, on the price of intervention by them. Still, most historians would agree that the anti-socialist forces in Germany were in bad disarray.[77] At the critical moment, even the Army had balked. Moore comments, "By their policies Ebert and his colleagues created in the *Freikorps* and parts of the old army the necessary instrument for counter- revolution of the old prefascist model (i.e., without massive popular support) and handed it to the right on a steel platter."[78] The question is whether these forces could have been broken, something not even tried by Ebert and his colleagues.[79]

Among recent commentators, Moore comes closest to the real issue. Yet he too misstates the problem. Getting a handle on this has importance beyond understanding the situation in Germany. A critical discussion of Moore's views of the alternatives that define the two poles which set the terms for a possible "third way" will demonstrate, and perhaps help to demystify, assumptions which nearly everyone takes for granted today.

Moore writes, "The problem before us is…whether in fact a 'third way' was possible somewhere between a de facto alliance with the old order and revolutionary dictatorship."[80] Moore assumes, oddly, that the *de facto* alliance was not "liberal" in the vague sense that stresses "the importance of rights of free expression and protection against the abuses of authority."81 This is surely a red herring, not because the Weimar Republic did not abuse these rights --what republic seeking to establish itself has not? -- but because Moore seems to assume that, since the new regime rested on a *de facto* alliance with the old order, Weimar was not a liberal democracy. The point is important.

It is true that the Weimar Republic was not revolutionary insofar as power was not redistributed. But the state did change from being something between a monarchy and a despotism in Montesquieu's sense to being almost a paradigm parliamentary democracy! Sovereignty was vested in an elected parliament, and the chief of state was elected. There was equal, general suffrage, a multiparty system, secret elections, and a free Press. Moore would not deny this; but if so, then surely something more is at issue.
Of course, the old order, although a monarchy with elements of an aristocratic culture, was for all that essentially a capitalist state. *Nor* was this changed. That in the new republic the ruling class was badly fractioned and, more critically, that it had immense difficulties securing a mass base are all too true. But this makes it an unstable liberal order, not a nonliberal order.

Indeed, that is just the problem of the "third way: " a way which was revolutionary in the sense that it would alter the fundamental relations of power in society. If this could have been accomplished, then the problems of a fractioned capitalist ruling class and a *missing* mass base might have been foreclosed. To transpose this into Weber's perspective, in the absence of a revolution that would break power, there was no hope for a strong parliament. Moreover, in the absence of a monarch, it was precisely because Weimar was a liberal republic with a missing mass base and a fractioned capitalist class that authoritarian populism was a possibility that was realized.[82]

But the other side of Moore's polarization is also misformulated. What is meant by "a revolutionary dictatorship"? A right-wing version was not impossible, although it was unlikely. Since the Army would not fight a civil war for the monarch in November 1918, it was hardly surprising that it would not stand behind Wolfgang Kapp and General von Luttwitz in their putsch of 1920.[83] It is important to remember that the *Reichswehr* was a *royal* army, "inconceivable without the King." "The Prussian officer was tied by bonds of special loyalty to the monarchy and to the bearer of the Crown, to whom alone he was responsible."[84] The idea of his abdication was, accordingly, unthinkable: "It removed the basis of the existence of the officers, their guiding principle.” [85]

Still, when General Count von der Schulenburg announced that "the army will march home in peace and order under its leaders and commanding generals, but not under the command of Your Majesty, for it stands no longer behind Your Majesty," there had already been a revolution of sorts!

What then of a left-wing revolutionary dictatorship, almost certainly what Moore had in mind? Whether this was possible also depended on the Army. Surely, the Army would not have led such a dictatorship. But it is just as unlikely that there would have been sufficient numbers in the Army to follow such a lead had a revolutionary party made the effort. By the summer of 1919, there were between 200,000 and 400,000 *Freikorps,* fighting for an SPD-led regime *against* USPD and Communist councils, the groups which, presumably, would have constituted the nucleus of a putative revolutionary dictatorship. But this misses the point. Nobody on the left of any significance even considered that he might be struggling to establish what we think of as Leninism! That anyone should have supposed that this was the opposite pole of the two possibilities is plausible only by seeing the Spartacists as a real revolutionary threat, then making them into Bolsheviks, and then ignoring the fact that at exactly this time the Bolsheviks were in the midst of a civil war which was critical only because it had the support of the "democracies" of the West and the Empire of Japan![86]

We need to explain this pervasive historiographical confusion, beautifully expressed in the view that it was the Spartacists who "drove the Majority Socialists into the arms of the reactionary militarists." Getting at the source of this confusion takes us back into history, back, indeed, into a great deal of the argument of this book. It will be well here to identify explicitly the key assumptions.

It is quite clear that many writers assume an identity between the party of "revolutionary dictatorship" and Bolshevism, and that is easily explained. But we need to see that this assumption leads to the desired conclusion only on the basis of background assumption~ which have nothing to do with the situation in Germany. They involve, in the first place, the persistent assumption that Lenin and the Bolsheviks had no democratic aspirations, and that the disastrous outcome in Russia was entirely due to their bankrupt philosophy. In chapter 11 I tried to show that this view cannot be sustained. This assumption, in turn, depends upon the belief that *parliamentary* democracy is the only viable, sound form of democracy. Much of this book has tried to provide some of the reasons for this belief.

Bearing on the understanding of Bolshevism as a "revolutionary dictatorship" is a third assumption: namely, that a revolutionary state can be "democratic" while it is fighting a counterrevolutionary war! In highly favored circumstances, with *no* interests in social transformation, the American Revolution did not altogether escape this, as noted in chapter 5; but the

French Revolution should have put modern historians on guard on this point. This, of course, was a feature of the account of chapter 9. Certainly war, interventionist and counterrevolutionary, has been a heavy burden of all twentieth-century socialist revolutions. Accordingly, it has been easy to assume that antidemocracy flowed from the socialist intentions of the leadership of these movements, instead of from the imperatives of war. In some cases it might well have done so, of course; in others--Nicaragua in recent years, for example --this was clearly not so.

Finally, then, we need to explain the identification of the party of revolutionary dictatorship with Bolshevism. Essentially, this grew out of the belief that German radicals were simply imitators of their Russian counter- parts who, for the reasons just noted, were construed as antidemocrats. This, in turn, depended on the fact -and fact it was -that the Russians had provided an example and some vocabulary for both the German people and the radical leadership. The revolution occurred first in Russia, and everyone in Germany knew that in Russia a revolution against the old order was in process. Moreover, the language was indeed the same, the "dictatorship of the proletariat," "workers' and soldiers' councils," and "red guards." The question, then, is, did the Russians provide *only* an example and some vocabulary, or was the Bolshevik *experience* being repeated, including presumably, its terrible outcome?

Remarkably, German socialists joined German generals in promoting the idea that unless dramatic steps were taken, the Bolshevik experience would be repeated. This was not just because Ebert hated revolution "like sin"; it was due, in part at least, to reasons which go back to 1848 and then to the summer of 1918, in the critical first year of the Bolshevik Revolution.

The term "dictatorship of the proletariat" had been a problem since the *Communist Manifesto* (as we saw in chapter 10). In the summer of 1918, German socialists had a debate over Bolshevism. As is well known, Kautsky was the main representative of the by then orthodox Marxist view which forbade any socialist seizure of power until capitalism had generated the appropriate conditions. The Bolshevik Revolution had repudiated this doctrine. Kautsky began his attack on the Bolsheviks from this perspective within weeks of the Bolshevik coup, on 15 November 1917. He gave it full "theoretical" treatment in his *Dictatorship of the Proletariat,* published, significantly, in Vienna --despite a plea from Haase to let the matter rest.[87]

German socialists knew, of course, that conditions in Russia were radically different from what they were in Germany --a fact of considerable importance. Moreover, even those who shared the doubts of Kautsky and the "moderates" had sympathy for the Bolshevik effort which, of course, was only just beginning. Thus, Hilferding could write, "One's heart is on their side, ...but one's mind just will not go along."[88]

All we need do now is read history backwards! As it turned out, the

"moderates" were not altogether right in their perception of the Russian outcome. But --and this is the point--they were half right. Contrary to everyone's expectations, the Bolsheviks succeeded in holding power; but they did not and could not realize the Marxist vision of socialism. From the Bolshevik point of view, however, this was precisely because their German comrades failed to bring revolution to Germany! Regardless, there are many Marxist revolutionaries, democratic socialists, and historians of all stripes who have taken that summer 1918 debate, sometimes explicitly, though usually not, to mark the great divide between "responsible" social democracy and "dictatorial" Leninism. But this ignores utterly the fact that Kautsky's 1918 posture did not represent the views or program of the USPD, and it ignores, as argued, the effort by the Bolsheviks to establish council democracy in Russia.

The identification of Bolshevism with Red Guards and workers' and soldiers' councils is striking, and even more easily explained. Significantly, it was the generals of the High Command who first identified workers' and soldiers' councils with Bolshevism. As noted, Groener could not wait to secure an "alliance" with the new regime of Ebert, precisely because he had instantly made this identification. His reasons could not have been clearer. The High Command was getting information from the eastern front and was aware of what had so recently happened to the Russian army, "the greatest mutiny in history." Indeed, on 9 November 1918, Hindenburg himself sent this urgent telegram to all army units:

> Since the movement to form soldiers' councils has already penetrated into the field army and in my opinion can no longer be stopped by resistance, it is necessary to get the movement into the officers' hands. For this purpose councils of trusted men *(Vertrauenrsäte)* are to be formed in all companies, batteries, squadrons, etc, It may be announced that the High Command intends to cooperate with the Chancellor Ebert, hitherto the leader of the moderate Social Democrats, to prevent the expansion of terrorist Bolshevism into Germany.[89]

After all that had happened, was this to happen to their army? One needed no fancy theory to see that one could not run an army, especially an army with the Prussian military tradition, on democratic principles! Indeed, one suspects that soldiers' councils with absolutely no "socialist" interests would have been equally anathema to them. Red Guards, similarly, were militia units in the classic sense, formed by civilians to fight the standing army of a monarch.

Finally, the creation of these images was profoundly assisted by difficulties in getting any sort of clear picture of what was happening in Russia from February 1918 on. Writing in 1922, Walter Lippmann, who knew about

the imperatives of both the modern state and journalism, observed that not only did the difficulties of the Russian language restrict information, but Russia was "closed to effective news reporting by the fact that the hardest thing to report is chaos, even though it is evolving chaos." This put Russian news "into the hands of censors and propagandists Until they made themselves ridiculous they created, let us admit, out of some genuine aspects of the huge Russian maelstrom, a set of stereotypes so evocative of hate and fear, that the very best instinct of journalism, its desire to go and see and tell was for a long time crushed."[90]

We now return to the question of whether the Russian experience was being repeated, including, presumably, its outcome in a one-party, anti- democratic state. First, as recent scholarship has shown, "In fact, for all the talk of learning from the Russians, there was very little thought of copying their methods; the only Russian practices followed in Germany in November 1918 were the workers' and soldiers' councils and, to a lesser extent, the Red Guards."[91] But these were, as Daumig said, a "natural" outcome of the "revolutionary impulse," or in Luxemburg's apt metaphor, "as instinctive as the cry of a newborn child."[92] Indeed, the idea of democracy was at least as old as the democratic counterrevolution of 404 BC Athens![93]

But, far more important, everyone understood that Russia in 1917 was not Germany in 1918. In Germany a very large working class had already been radicalized, and there is considerable evidence that "a broad unified socialist middle current existed in the working class that transcended party lines."[94] As Oertzen says, "when the bloody so-called 'Spartacist disturbances' were taking place all over Germany, Social Democrats, Independents, and Communists collaborated for four weeks on the basis of common program. ...This unity was forced upon the leaders by the workers."[95] Of course, the Ruhr miners, even "the workers of Germany," are not Germany. Nevertheless, there was in Germany a very large working class, perhaps some 30 percent of the population; and no doubt, this considerable number could easily have been the basis for a far more radical restructuring of German society. Moore comments that "there can be no doubt that they [the workers] would have welcomed policies to the left of those actually pursued."[96]

Second, in Germany, the peasantry represented a very different kind of problem from that which it had presented in Russia. Not only was it far smaller relatively, but it did not have the land hunger and *muzhik* sensibilities which had so complicated Bolshevik plans for feeding the population, not to mention for socialist transformation. Third, a moderate program, no more radical than Lenin's program for Russia, might well have won at least the passive consent of the small bourgeois, including the "new" middle class. Even more important, Ebert's regime did not face counterrevolution abetted

by foreigners. Quite the opposite: it faced revolution by the ordinary people of Germany. In Germany, as in the United States in 1787, a far more radical form of democracy was possible.

This is the main point. The people who feared Bolshevism and workers' and soldiers' councils--Ebert, Groener, Hindenburg, Erzberger, Stresemann, and many more--feared them because they feared *democracy,* not because they feared a dictatorship. To be sure, they were endorsing the views of Plato, Aristotle, Madison, and Kant in this. Democracy is rule of the poor, enslaved by the necessities of dull labor. The poor are not able to govern themselves, still less others. They will bungle everything, not least the system which has made "civilization" possible, not least any system which rewards the wise and industrious!

The Third Way

Moore's misformulation of the two poles has been discussed in an effort to clarify some pervasive distortions about a critical period in recent history. But if, on the present view, Moore's fornulation of the two poles is a misformulation, he certainly offers a plausible "third way." He distinguishes two aspects to this. On the one hand, the government in Berlin would have had to "intervene decisively in the affairs of the army and the bureaucracy by putting its own men in key positions to control policy. In the army that would have meant using and influencing the soldiers' councils as well as sending representatives with broad plenary powers to the High Command."[97] On the other hand, "in social and economic policy it would have been necessary for the government to take control of some key sectors of the economy…and give the workers additional influence over conditions in the pit and on the shop floor."[98] Gerald Feldman goes somewhat further:

> Without wanting to define all the elements of a third way, I nevertheless would place myself in basic agreement with those who argue that a good deal more could have been done by way of curbing the military, of creating a democratic army, of taming the bureaucracy and eliminating some of its more objectionable elements. Socialization of the coal mining industry was quite possible. I think as a matter of fact that some of the industrialists expected it.[99]

But these steps are "not very different from what the moderate wing of the USPD wanted."[100] This seems unexceptionable. Indeed, for *all* the radicals, including here the Communists, the problem was to establish conditions for the flowering of the councils and for encouraging that "education" which would give the people the capacity to rule themselves.

As Luxemburg had it, "The masses must learn how to use power by using it." [10]

Why was a More Radical Policy not Attempted?

This is Moore's question, and his answer is this:

> With the leaders of the industrial working class justifiably suspicious of each other on the basis of wartime experience, and with no obviously powerful enemies to contend with on their right, the quarrelling and polarization could gather momentum until they fatally damaged the whole left and rendered powerless those between Ebert and the Spartacists. Hence the old order in this largely abortive revolution was able to rely upon the "responsible" moderates to do *its* dirty work, that of suppressing radicalism."[102]

Moore argues, rightly, that "relatively slight changes in timing and tactics in this fluid situation could…have brought about quite different consequences." Indeed, "slightly different changes in leadership and tactics" might well have made a monumental difference so that "not only Germany but the rest of the world might have been spared enormous tragedies."[103]

Surely, this last is true --and must be emphasized. On the other hand, Moore's explanation too quickly distributes the blame between Ebert and the Spartacists. To repeat, the Spartacists were not some antidemocratic lunatic fringe. Ebert was a "responsible" moderate, not a socialist. But for Germany in 1918-19, it was too late to be a bourgeois moderate: the masses wanted democracy.[104] To be sure, Ebert, a bourgeois moderate dressed up in the suit of "democratic socialism," found it useful to say that anything left of his posture was antidemocratic, especially since the profoundly democratic idea of workers' and soldiers' councils could be described as antidemocratic. Still, given that there were no powerful enemies on the right, one can only conclude that Ebert and his colleagues, like so many, did not attempt a more radical policy because, when push came to shove, they feared the enlarged democracy which the workers and the "radicals" were calling for .

Finally, there is the question of Ebert and his group. There were remarkable contingent facts that thrust him into leadership on 10 November. That he was so thrust into leadership is absolutely critical to everything that followed. But he was so thrust into leadership because he was a chairman of the SPD and not one of those who had been part of its left wing but had left the party in 1917 to form the USPD. That the SPD was what it was is also critical. But at this point, one must advert to Weber's analysis.

The historical experience of the German parties explains the SPD and explains Ebert. He was also part of the tragic legacy of Bismarck. His party was a bureaucratic organization functioning in a "weak parliament." It could not even successfully engage in "negative politics"--hence the USPD. Ebert was the chairman of the SPD because he was a competent bureaucrat.[105] A competent bureaucrat was first made chancellor, then elected president; and hence the tragedy of Germany and all the world.

End Notes

[73] Koppel S. Pinson, *Modern Germany, Its History and Civilization* (New York; Macmillan, 1954), p. 380. Although the premises of this conclusion have been undermined by more recent scholarship, the view continues to inform a large body of conventional opinion. See n. 75.

[74] Ibid.

[75] The point is treated by a number of recent Gennan scholars. Wheeler writes;

> As Volker Rittberger has observed [,] the SPD leadership attempted to give its participation in the "coalition of order" a certain credibility by playing up the so-called and non-existent "Spartacist threat." But it was the Social Democrats' foot-dragging which gradually led to radical reaction by those who believed they saw their Revolution being betrayed and not the other way round. ...The result was regional civil war or what Rurup and Eberhard Kolb refer to as the second phase of the Revolution. ("'Ex oriente lux?"' p. 46)

[76] Klaus Epstein, "Three American Studies of Gennan Socialism," *World Politics,* II (1959), repr. (with abridgment) in Richard H. Hunt (ed.), *11Ie Creation of the Weimar Republic: Stillborn Democracy?* (Lexington, Mass.; Heath, 1969), p. 67.

[77] Carsten concludes, "In central Europe the conservative forces were completely dead for a short time. In 1918-19, they showed no strength whatsoever and they only came back into power with the failure of the Communist uprisings and their suppression by the Free Corps or the white terror in Hungary" ("Revolutionary Situations," p. 35).

Carsten considers the possibilities of British intervention in his *Britain and the Weimar Republic* (New York: Schocken, 1984). He reports that in March

1919, due to "alarming reports of British officers and the fear of Bolshevism spreading westwards," large shipments of food were sent despite the formal existence of the blockade. General Malcolm was saying that "it is…most important that the present government, or something like it, be kept in power, and I would urge that the Allied governments should do whatever they can do support it" (p. 22). But what they could do at that time was very limited. It is also striking that Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, questioned the claim that the regime was "a constitutional regime." "According to his information, the German government was accepting 'an extreme Socialist programme' to maintain itself in power" (ibid., p. 37). This distortion of events in Russia and Germany was widespread. Was it the result of paranoia? See below.

[78] Moore, *Injustice,* p. 388.
[79] Again, Carsten writes:

> In my opinion, there was…a very good chance that [the Ebert regime] need not have relied on the General Staff and its generals. Such a regime could have created it own military force….As German "Social Democracy" was considerably stronger than the Austrian Social Democrats, they also could have created a "Volkswehr"; and indeed the Germans passed a law that created the "Volkswehr" and local "Volkswehr" units came into being in many parts of Germany. The elements were there, but the chance was not used. ("Revolutionary Situations," p. 33).

For some discussion, see Richard N. Hunt, "Friedrich Ebert and the German Revolution of 1918," in Krieger and Stem (eds), *The Responsibility of Power.* Of course, after the first phase of the civil war was over, one could hardly encourage a *Volkswehr,* when the *Volk* were in the process of creating a Red Army in response to counterrevolution!

[80] Moore, *Injustice,* p. 386.

[81] Ibid., p. 385.

[82] See David Abraham, 77ze *Collapse of the Weimar Republic,* 2nd edn (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986). It is fair to say, I believe, that Abraham provides the materials for a powerful explanation of *an* "authoritarian populist" solution to the unsolved problems of Weimar but does not at all explain National Socialism, the particularly virulent form which it took.

[83] Carsten, *Reichswehr,* pp. 78-89.

[84] Ibid., p. 8.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Carsten said, "In my opinion, there was no possibility whatever to establish a Leninist or Communist regime in Germany in 1918 -1919 for the simple reason that the Spartacists, or later, Communists were extremely weak; the left-wing workers at that time, if they supported any party, did not support the Communists, but supported the Independent Social-Democratics, the U.S.P.D., which was a large left-wing party, but not. ..a revolutionary party" ("Revolutionary Situations," p. 33). No one would argue with his judgment regarding the strength of the

Communists; but it is hard to know what to make of his assertion that the USPD was not a "revolutionary party."

It seems that Carsten has accepted, perhaps despite himself, the dichotomy: between what actually occurred or something like it and "revolutionary dictatorship." It is striking that there are contemporary "Leninists" who would agree with this! See below.

[87] Morgan, *Socialist Left,* p. 103.
[88] Quoted in ibid., p. 101.
[89] Quoted in Carsten, *Reichswehr,* p. 10.
[90] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), p. 354. See below for a discussion of Lippmann's insights regarding the problem of "pictures in their heads."
[91] Morgan, *Socialist Left,* p. 99.
[92] Luxemburg, *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks,* p. 414.
[93] See Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1965).

[94] See Peter von Oertzen, "The Ruhr Miners and the Third Way," abridged trans. in Hunt, *Creation of the Weimar Republic,* p. 77. Oertzen's 1963 monograph *Betriebsräte in der Novemberrevolution* (Dusseldorf, 1963) is put to use by Morgan, who, supplementing it with other research, is led to conclude: "The ideal of workers' councils in some form was held by a broad section of the socialist movement, not only by Communists and radical Independents but also by most moderate Independents, much of the Majority Socialist rank and file, and even a few leading members of the SPD" *(Socialist Left,* p. 251).

[95] Oertzen, "Ruhr Miners," p. 000.
[96] Moore, *Injustice,* p. 389.
[97] Ibid., p. 386.
[98] Ibid., p. 387.
[99] Gerald D. Feldman, "Socio-economic Structures in the Industrial Sector and Revolutionary Potentialities, 1917-22," in Bertrand (ed.), *Revolutionary Situations,* p. 175.
[100] Moore, *Injustice,* p. 392.
[101] Luxemburg, *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks,* p. 426.
[102] Moore, *Injustice,* p. 396.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Wheeler, "'Ex orient lux?'", pp. 39-40.

[105] Schorske, Hunt, and others have suggested, perhaps extravagantly, that, as Hunt puts it, "in a large sense Ebert was the creator of the famous SPD bureaucracy" *(Creation of the Weimar Republic,* pp. 317-18). But however this may be, it may be worth pointing out that Ebert was considered for a post on the party executive in 1904, a suggestion which was vetoed by Bebel, who described him as "standing too far to the right." The next year he was elected as one of four party secretaries, "because of strong support given by the reformist-minded trade unions" (ibid., p. 317). He "soon found himself busy developing and rationalizing the party apparatus in accordance with a newly adopted organizational statute. He introduced modern office methods… appointed paid functionaries to staff new regional organizations, and required regular reports from both regional and local units" (ibid.). The USPD schism left Ebert in command. After Haase and the anti-war "radicals" left, at the Wurzburg Congress of 1917, he became, along with Scheidemann, the SPD senior co-chairman.

War and Democracy
Panel at 2003 Annual Meeting of SAAP
Vincent M. Colapietro, John J. Stuhr, & Peter T. Manicas
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Introduction to Panel on "War & Democracy"

The advancement of philosophical reflection in the United States demands addressing the urgent issues confronting ordinary persons in their everyday lives, here and abroad. Moreover, it demands addressing these issues as they confront individuals in their role as citizens. No cluster of issues is more pressing or significant than the one pertaining to war, terrorism, and counterterrorism. The vitality of democracy is nowhere more evident than in the informed, critical engagement by citizens with governmental actions to be carried out in their names and with their taxes. The crossing of disciplinary boundaries or cultural divides in irenic exchanges (however heated or uncivil) is of negligible importance in comparison with the crossing of territorial borders and national divides in armed conflicts. The culture wars in the academy are hardly worthy of mention in comparison with warring cultures around the world.

Even a highly cursory glance at the central preoccupations of classical American philosophers reveals that each was either a participant in a war against war or (at least) an acute critic of the bellicose propensities of nation states. In an article on love, C. S. Peirce predicted: "The twentieth century, in its latter half, shall surely see the deluge-tempest burst upon the social order, - to clear a world as deep in ruin as that greed-philosophy [of *laissez-faire* capitalism] has long plunged it …" In one of his most famous writings, William James argued for the necessity to identify "The Moral Equivalent of War" (an essay written for and published by the Association for International Conciliation, Leaflet #7, but also published in *McClure's Magazine,* August 1910). In what has seemed to many merely a quixotic gesture, Josiah Royce in *War and Insurance* (NY: Macmillan, 1914) explored the possibility of establishing a system of insurance as a means of counteracting the bellicose tendencies of nation states. John

Dewey argued for the need to institute more authoritative juridical bodies for arbitrating international disputes. He also championed the cause of outlawing war. In "National-Mindedness and International-Mindedness" (1929), George Herbert Mead states the problem of war as succinctly and forcefully as it has ever been formulated: "Self-defense remains a permissible ground for fighting, but with no war of offense there would be none of defense, and wars would banish with the development of adequate means of negotiation." But, as Mead immediately adds, we are not willing to renounce our readiness to fight as a step toward instituting such means of negotiation.

In his *Autobiography* (NY: International Publishers, 1968), W. E. B. Du Bois writes:

> Today the United States is the leading nation in the world, which apparently believes that war is the only way to settle present disputes and difficulties. For this reason it is spending fantastic sums of money, and wasting wealth and energy on the preparation of war, which is nothing less than criminal. Yet the United States dare not stop spending money for war. If she did her economy, which is based on the preparation for war, might collapse. Therefore, we prepare for the Third World War; we spread our soldiers and arms over the earth and we bribe every nation we can to become our allies. We are taxing our citizens into poverty, crime and unemployment, and systematically distorting the truth about socialism. We have used the horror of germ warfare. Some of our leaders are ready to use it again. (419)[1]

Quotations from Jane Addams and numerous other representatives from the diverse traditions of American thought might be added to these, but this selection is sufficient to indicate the centrality of this topic.

Many members of SAAP are also members of such organizations as Philosophers Concerned for Peace and, moreover, are participants in grass roots peace movements (indeed, Beth J. Singer has served as president of not only SAAP but also Philosophers Concerned for Peace). At the Summer Institute in American Philosophy (University of Vermont; July 8-13, 2002) sponsored by SAAP, Michael Eldridge conducted a session on "Dewey and War." One of our most distinguished members, Peter T. Manicas, is the author of a historically encompassing and philosophically subtle work entitled *War and Democracy* (Blackwell, 1989).

The professionalization of philosophy has produced more than what James identified as the PhD Octopus. The "institutionalizing on a large scale of any natural combination of need and motive always tends,' James stresses, "to run into technicality and to develop a tyrannical Machine with unforeseen powers of exclusion and corruption." Educational institutions and scholarly associations are persistently warped in the direction of technical sophistication and clever displays of what amounts to little more than literary learnedness broadly understood. The octopus reaches out and enfolds ever more prey in its tentacles, straggling them of their life. A nation is, apparently,

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[1] I am indebted to Lee A. McBride III for calling me attention to this important text.

positioning itself to attack another country and the intellectuals within this nation gather, in various settings, to discuss disciplinary crossings and cultural boundaries, with little or no reference to the bellicose nationalism dominating popular media and quotidian attitudes.

Democracy is not a gift but a task. Democracy by its very nature can never be a secure possession. It can only be a precarious accomplishment signaling the uncommon courage, patience, and paradoxically impatience of ordinary women and men. Democracy can never be less than what Michel Foucault identified as the task of the Enlightenment – a patient labor giving effective form to our impatience for liberty.

The purpose of this panel is to address issues pertaining to war *and* democracy. It encompasses the desire to acknowledge the singular contribution of Peter Manicas to think these complex issues. The insufficient notice of this singular contribution by professional philosophers outside of SAAP is regrettable but perhaps understandable (understandable in light of the insular and academic character of so much mainstream philosophy); however, it is not at all comprehensible how such important work on such a pressing topic has received virtually no attention by the members of SAAP. Thus, in the pluralistic, engaged, historicist spirit of Peter Manicas' *War and Democracy,* we will take up anew the issues confronting the citizens of a nation whose comfort, security, and liberty are secured by military means. At a time such as this, the silence of philosophers on questions concerning war and democracy contributes to the marginalization and indeed irrelevance of philosophy as a critical voice in contemporary culture. Nothing could block the road of advancing American philosophy more than such silence.

Reflections on War and Democracy

Vincent Colapietro

Introduction

Both historically and conceptually, the question of democracy is, as Peter Manicas asserts on the first page of *War and Democracy* and demonstrates on virtually every page thereafter, inseparable from the question of war. Hence, to take seriously the question of democracy demands confronting squarely issues pertaining to armed conflict, international negotiation, and related matters. But, from a pragmatist perspective, this means confronting these issues in their actual historical shape and their contemporary urgency. As Michael Ignatieff notes in *The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War & the Modern Conscience* (NY: Henry Holt & Co., 1998), "the past continues to torment because it is *not* past" (p. 186). Past atrocities, ancient as well as recent, are seared into our national memory. To keep faith with those who have been the victims of such atrocities historically has meant – and continues to mean – a resolute refusal to accept these individuals have died in vain. So, Ignatieff observes: "Joyce's great rebellion [the one voiced by Stephen Dedaelus in *Ulysses*: "History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake"] was against the idea of history as fate," compelling each generation to reproduce the hatreds of the previous one because keeping faith with the dead – honoring their memory – seems to require taking up arms to avenge them" (pp. 189-90).

Our histories, most obviously those of our nation and our species, have been ones of war. At some level we have never learned that killing others will not bring back our own dead (cf. Ignatieff, p. 190). Insofar as we have failed to learn this we guarantee the past will never be past. Despite the efforts of James, Royce, Dewey, Mead, and others within our traditions to confront squarely issues of war and, moreover, to explore painstakingly the inseparable link between the realization of democratic practices and the reduction of armed conflict, more – much more – remains to be done here. No problems of women and men are more deserving of our consideration than those pertaining to war, terrorism, and counterterrorism. No approach is more promising than that exemplified in the pragmatic, pluralistic, and historicist work of such contemporary social theorists and commentators as Anthony Giddens and Peter Manicas, Michael Ignatieff and Cheyney Ryan, David Rieff and Glen Gray, Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn. For advocates of such an approach, often our harshest critics (e.g., Randolf Bourne and Walter Lippmann) are our most helpful allies. They allow us to realize more honestly our ideals and, of greater moment, to revise more radically these ideals themselves. "Old ideals," in Bourne's words, "crumble; new ideals must be forged." These include ideals of American democracy especially in reference to armed conflict and, closely allied to this, economic imperialism.

I

Let me offer these further reflections, from this distinctive angle of philosophical vision. There are, at this juncture, virtually no terrorists – there are only counterterrorists. The distinction between freedom fighters and terrorists tends to distort description and to deflect analysis; even worse, it so delimits the scope of criticism as to blunt the critical

edge of political conscience. It allows for the invincible presumption of innocence by disallowing the radically disconcerting possibility of our own complicity in what was befallen us.

Presumed innocence is a morally suspect and politically debilitating category, precisely because it undermines the most important form of critique – self-criticism. As Charles Peirce notes, "a stay-at-home conscience does the most to render the earth inhabitable" (8.162).

Contra President George W. Bush, we are not the target of counterterrorism because we love freedom and others are envious of what we have. We are such a target because others love freedom and they are unwilling to allow our freedom to be purchased with the coin of theirs. Put somewhat differently, they are not envious of what we have but desirous of what they do not have – what they do not have *because* of what we do have, also because of how we have acquired and augmented our possessions and luxuries.[2] Our invincible presumption of innocence blinds us from what is obvious, disposes us to accept what is incredible. We are blind to our own blindness (Peirce); and this double blindness is one with our presumed innocence. Take Laura Bush as a case in point. Her iconic status as a deeply decent person, no doubt rooted in quite genuinely admirable traits of character, needs to be seen for what it is – the sanctification of innocence bought at the price of ignorance. This is an active, aggressive ignorance, stemming from Peirce calls the method of tenacity; for it is the result of an active, aggressive ignoring of what clamors for recognition and notice. Recall that the method of tenacity involves clinging to a belief even though the deliverances of experience call for the radical revision, if not the outright refection, of one's cherished belief.

On the cover of the March 24th issue of *The Nation* there is an image of Laura Bush's face, circled by a halo, the rays of which have the shape of missiles. She is holding a book, while two tiny angels on each side of her are borne aloft on their wings, with trumpets pressed to their lips. In this issue there is a fictional interview, written by Tony Kushner, between Laura Bush and an angel (March 24, 2003, 11-15). The First Lady has come to read to several children, but is initially taken aback by their attire (the children are in their pajamas). The angel gently asks: "Perhaps this is the first time you have read to dead children, Mrs. Bush?" (11). In response to Mrs. Bush's question "How did you die, darling?" the angel rather than the child answers:

> In 199, an American plane dropped a bomb filed with several tons of concrete on the power station near his village. He was already malnourished; he had been malnourished since birth. The power station that was crushed by the bomb was believed to be supplying power to a plant

[2] In "Resistance to Civil Government," Henry David Thoreau suggests: "It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, t devote himself to the eradication of any, even the most enormous wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to engage him; but it is his duty, at east, to wash his hands of it, and if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support. If I devote myself t other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, a least, that I do not pursue tem sitting upon another man's shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations too. See what gross inconsistency is tolerated" (231-32).

> suspected of producing certain agents necessary for the development of biotoxins. We do not know if it did. We do know that it supplied power for the water purification system for this village. He already had gastroenteritis and nearly chronic diarrhea, for which medicines were unavailable. Then the water purification system failed and he drank a glass of water his mother gave him infested by a large intestinal parasite. He died of dehydration, shitting water, then blood, then water again, so much! Then a trickle, everyone was sad, there was no food, he shook so hard the screws holding his bed together were loosened. It took three days to die. (11-12)

Laura Bush is moved to respond to this account: "That's really awful" (12). And, then in response to the angel's own agreement with this, the First Lady interjects: "Saddam Hussein is a terrible man." At the end of the interview, after having read to the children but also after having learned something of their lives and deaths, she says: "But. I adhere to my ideas" (15).

Such adherence is the unshakable prerogative of invincible innocence. But such innocence is maintained only by ignoring. So, I repeat: there are today no terrorists, only counterterrorists. All of the principals in the conflict have blood on their hands and have had blood on their hands for at least decades. There is, except for children, no allowable presumption of innocence, especially when this presumption means the inalienable right to ignorance, to ignore what even children can clearly see (in large measure, because it is what children suffer – like other human beings, children perceive most vividly what they suffer most intensely). No one has a right to say, "But, dear dead children, I adhere to my ideas," almost always leaving unsaid "even if the defense of these ideas is connected to the reasons for your deaths."

Our adherence should not be to particular ideas but to communal practices in which even cherished ideas are severely and continuously tested, above all, tested against the observations, judgments, and imaginations of others, especially others differently situated and this differently affected by our beliefs, actions, and purchases. Overcoming ignorance demands detecting and correcting our errors and distortions, including our self-deceptions. But the identification and rectification of these demand what Peirce calls "a contrite fallibilism," an abiding willingness to confess the ineluctable consequence of our finitude and fallibility – the mass and mess of errors in which we are always enmeshed. Our ability to learn from experience depends upon contrite fallibilism; our stupidity (precisely, our inability to learn from our experience, regardless of its force or redundancy) is enshrined by the arrogance and cowardice to which the contrite fallibilism stands as a stark opposite.

The words of Hannah Arendt bring into focus another aspect of stupidity, one also bearing on the issues at hand. For the better part of the twentieth century, she observed,

> Nothing which was being done, no matter how stupid, no matter how many people knew and foretold the consequences, could be undone or prevented. Every event had the finality of a last judgment, a judgment that was passed

> by neither Good nor the devil, but looked rather like the expression of some irredeemably stupid fatality. (Quoted in Schell's "The Futility of War," *Harper's* [March 2003], 34)

The seemingly inexorably movement from one murderous, monstrous scene to another indeed obeys to obey a logic, however stupid (however unable to modify its course in light of consequences). In Kurt Vonnegut's phrase from *Slaughter-House Five,* "And so it goes" – on and on and on. The cycle of violence is not and indeed cannot be broken since the most recent act of counterterrorism is taken by its victims to be the originary act of violence.

To assert that there are only counterterrorists does not mean – to stress, does *not* mean – that all counterterrorists are equally justified in their strategies, targets, grievances, and outrages. It certainly does not mean the people in the World Trade Towers and arguably also those in the Pentagon were legitimate targets for counterterrorist attacks. Hard moral and political choices have to be made in the light of far-reaching and deep-rooted complicities. The presumption of innocence is fantastic, the acknowledgment of complicity in what has befallen us not only a mark of maturity but also a step toward decency.

We are and have been throughout our history as a species in a state of war, though intermittently we have grown so weary of slaughter and the trains of horrors streaming in its wake (not least of all rape) as to stop for awhile. Our periods of peace have been, for the most part, a respite from savagery. One of our most important social critics, rarely treated at our meetings, is Mark Twain.[3] Let us not forget his low estimate of the human species ("Man is the only animal which blushes – or needs to"). Let also not forget the dark, haunting words of such pieces as "The War Prayer." With him, I am inclined to insist: at least as far as the bellicose history of nation states is concerned, there are only human savages, none of whom can claim the moral high ground. Certainly there are very few, if any, world leaders who can identify, without equivocation and hypocrisy, an axis of evil exclusive of their own nations. The global war system, intimately connected to an expanding global economy, precludes this. Even so, when one tribe of savages finds or forges a way of provisionally putting down its weapons, in order to adjudicate its conflicts with another band, there opens the possibility of transcending, to some small yet real degree, the savagery of the combatants. The "weapons of mass distraction"[4] are, however, so effective, and our impulses toward a flattering portrait of our own inherent decency so channeled by a consumer ideology, we have great difficulty in seeing our own manifest savagery and our own implicit support of tyrannical regimes.[5]

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[3] Philip Foner's *Mark Twain: Social Critic* (NY: International Press, 1966) is still a useful guide to this important dimension of Twain's cultural importance.

[4] I borrow this expression from Michael Moore's open letter to George W. Bush (March 17, 2003). It can be found on his website: www.michaelmoore.com.

[5] "Every form of contestation against this tyranny," John Berger contends, "is comprehensible. Dialogue with it is impossible. For s to live and die properly, things have to be named properly. Let us reclaim our words" (*Harper's* [March 2003], 17).

II

The measure of civilization is, as John Dewey so eloquently stated in *Liberalism and Social Action*, "the degree in which the method of cooperative intelligence replaces the method of brute conflict" (81) – the degree in which the means of coercive force and terrifying threats to use such force are replaced by the means of communal deliberation. This means, the degree to which force and terror are replaced by local and global democracy.

In *The Public and Its Problems*, Dewey also helpfully underscores the importance of art in coming to terms with any historical actuality and the inherent possibilities partly definitive of any historical moment (cf. Schell). "The function of art," he notes, "has always been to break through the crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness" (183). Such consciousness is always anaesthetized awareness, numbed to pain but at the price of being unresponsive to much in the swirl of events in which we are enveloped. Art is an intensified encounter with the commonplace or (to borrow Arthur Danto's expression) a transfiguration of the ordinary. This is, at least, central to Dewey's emphasis on the function of art:

> Common things … not things rare and remote are the means by which the deeper levels of life are touched so that they spring up as desire and thought. This process *is* art. Poetry, the drama, the novel, are proofs that the problem of presentation is not insoluble. Artists have always been the real purveyors of news, for it is not the outward happening in itself which is new, but the kindling of it in emotion, perception, and appreciation. (Emphasis added)

The function of art, like that of philosophy, is to deploy some symbolic medium for the sake of deepening and enlarging our consciousness of self and world. But the critical function of art is made necessary, in part, by the transcendent fixations of philosophy.

> The most serious indictment to be brought against non-empirical [or transcendental] philosophies is that the have cast a cloud over the things of ordinary experience. They have not been content to rectify them. They have discredited them at large. In casting aspersion upon the things of everyday experience, the things of action and affection and everyday intercourse, they have done something worse than fail to give these affairs the intelligent direction they so much need. … The serious matter is that philosophers have denied that common experience is capable of developing from within itself methods which will secure direction for itself and will create inherent standards of judgment and value. (LW 1: 40-41)

Perhaps an even more serious matter is that transcendental philosophies have allied themselves with those human tendencies to despair that the joys and consummations, the transitory erotic attachments and deeper identifying loyalties, of everyday life are sufficient for human flourishing. Art is a recovery of the importance of

the commonplace, a celebration of the sufficiency of the everyday – and, in effect, an indictment of what Nietzsche calls the "poison-mixers."

The ultimately transitory consummations of a mortal animal bequeathed with symbolic intelligence and historical consciousness can be, for naturalists such as Dewey and Santayana, Marx and Freud, sufficient not only unto the day but also unto the entirety of one's life. The function of poetry is, to repeat, "to break through the crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness," to be seized by the sustaining significance of everyday actions, affections, and exchanges.

So, I feel even in the context of a gathering of philosophers and other theorists, to invoke the aid of the artist, in this case the literary artist. Allow me, then, to read several poems, beginning with ones written by Robert Bly at a different time and in protest to a different war.[6] The tragic irony is that, without modification they have a direct applicability to our present moment. No difference here makes any difference at all. The first poem is a dark, bitter poem entitled "Counting the Small-Boned Bodies" – a very dark, very bitter poem:

Let's count the bodies over again.
If we could only make the bodies smaller,
The size of skulls,
We could make a whole plain white with skulls in the
Moonlight!

If we could only make the bodies smaller,
Maybe we could get
A year's kill in front of us on a desk!

If we could only make the bodies smaller,
We could fit
A body into a finger-ring, for a keepsake forever.

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[6] I am typing the revisions of this paper on March 18, 2003, the 18th of this month being the birthday of Wilfred Owen. In Writer's Almanac for today (NPR), Garrison Keillor recalls: It's the birthday of Wilfred Owen, English poet and soldier, born in Oswestry, Shropshire, England (1893). He is considered the foremost poet who wrote during and about World War I. In 1915 Owen enlisted in the British army. In the first letters he wrote home to his mother, Owen sounded optimistic and said he had a "fine, heroic feeling about being in France." But a year and a half later, he was writing his mother about a cold march through flooded trenches, where soldiers who got stuck in the heavy mud had to leave their waders and move ahead on bleeding, freezing feet. Owen wrote about this cold march, which ended with an attack of poisonous gas, in his famous poem, "Dulce et Decorum Est:" Owen wrote nearly all of his poems over one year, from August 1917 to September 1918 including "Anthem for Doomed Youth" and "The End." In June 1917, Owen was wounded and sent home to England. Despite the efforts of his friends to find him a staff job, he returned to France and was killed in action on November 4th, 1918, one week before Armistice Day.

The second poem by Bly is entitled “As the Asian War Begins”:

> There are longings to kill that cannot be seen,
> Or seen only by a minister who no longer believes in God
> Living in his parish like a crow in its nest.
>
> And there are flowers with murky centers,
> Impenetrable, ebony, basalt …
>
> Conestogas go past, over the Platte, their contents
> Hidden from us, murderers riding under the canvas …
>
> Give us a glimpse of what we cannot see,
> Our enemies, the soldiers and the poor.

The third and final poem by Robert Bly is “Turning Away from Lies,” from which I will read only the first two stanzas:

> If we are truly free, and live in a free country,
> When shall I be without this heaviness of mind?
> When shall I have peace? Peace this and pace that way?
> I have already looked beneath the street
> And there I saw the bitter waters going down,
> The ancient worms eating up the sky.
>
> Christ did not come to redeem our sins
> The Chris Child was not obedient to his parents
> The Kingdom of Heaven does not mean the next life
> No one in business can be a Christian
> The two worlds are both in this world

Allow me to invoke the voice of another poet, that of Edna St. Vincent Millay. The poem, entitled “Conscientious Objector,” originally appeared in a volume itself entitled *Wine from These Grapes*.

> I shall die, but that is all I shall do for Death.
>
> I hear him leading his horse out of the stall; I hear the
> clatter on the barn-floor.
> He is in haste; he has business in Cuba, business in the
> Balkans, many calls to make this morning.
> But I will not hold the bridle while he cinches the
> girth.
> And he may mount by himself: I will not give him a
> leg up.

Though he flick my shoulders with his whip, I will not
tell him which way the fox ran.
With his hoof on my breast, I will not tell him where
the black boy hides in the swamp.
I shall die, but that is all I shall do for Death; I
am not on his pay-roll.

I will not tell him the whereabouts of my friends nor
my enemies either;
Though he promise me much, I will not map him the
route to any man's door.
Am I a spy in the land of the living, that I should de-
liver men to Death?
Brother, the password and the plans of our city are
safe with me; never through me
Shall you be overcome.

The form of solidarity expressed by Millay in this poem is crucial for beginning to understand how the effective opposition to war entails a progressive enlargement of not only sympathies but also identifications. We must identify with the fox being hunted for sport, with the black youth hiding in the swamp, to some extent even with those who would destroy us if they could ("I will not tell him the whereabouts of my friends nor/my enemies either") (Woolf)

In the practical terms of political institutions, however, we need to transform oligarchic liberalism into truly democratic liberalism (see especially Chapters V and VI of Peter Manicas' *The Death of the State*). Among other things, this means conceiving democracy principally as a form of practice. In Manicas' own eloquent words, those concluding his compelling defense of the democratic community,

> The democratic community is not merely an abstract ideal but a mode of action, a praxis, in which persons discover their social selves as they struggle against that consciousness which binds them to the existing social order and which they reproduce in the form of their everyday life. Concretely, this means, at least, widening and exploiting that breach in the contemporary consciousness which, however, unclearly, feels impoverished by the very system it helps to sustain. It means resisting authoritarian structures and subjecting them to pressures commensurate with the democratic ideal. [See Chapter V] It means generating new forms of collective action which are democratic and which can serve both to challenge the existing order and to prefigure the existence of increasingly democratic forms of social and personal life. Other visions can be imposed from above, but the democratic community must grow as a process in which the dissolution of the centers of power is at the same time the processes in which individuals gain power over their lives. (1974, 256-57)

These are the concluding sentences of *The Death of the State*. The end of this book is the beginning of wisdom insofar as the question of democracy is concerned. It is such because these words are nothing less than the distillation of a tradition going back at least as far as Plato and Aristotle, and radically reconstructed by John Dewey and C. Wright Mills, though reconstructed in light of Max Weber and above all Karl Marx. Indeed, one of the scandals of American philosophy in the previous century was the widespread failure of Dewey and others during the early and middle decades of the twentieth century to take Marx and arguably Freud, also Durkheim and unquestionably Weber, with the seriousness these social theorists were taken by the European contemporaries of Dewey and his compatriots. One course of action would be to bemoan, loudly and repeatedly, this failure. Another would be to do, without noise or precedence, what one's philosophical forebears left undone. What if the author of *The Public and Its Problems, Individualism Old and New, Liberalism and Social Action,* and various other contributions to political philosophy had seriously confronted Marx, also had more seriously confronted Walter Lippmann and C. Wright Mills than Dewey actually did – further, what if he had lived another twenty years, dying in 1972 rather than 1952 (i.e., what if he had lived long enough to read John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* [1971])? There is however no need to imagine what Dewey would have written in light of a serious, penetrating engagement with these figures. Peter Manicas' *The Death of the State* is nothing less than this, his *Democracy and War* far more than anyone in our tradition remotely anticipated.

We honor Peter Manicas' work most not by direct praise but by our own critical engagement with the pressing issues of our historical time, in light of his remarkable achievement. We honor his work by taking up anew his insistence that democracy is a form of praxis, by exploring imaginatively the specific directions in which the democratic community must grow, precisely "as a process in which the dissolution of the centers of power is at the same time the processes in which individuals gain power over their lives."

At least three tentative conclusions follow from trying to honor his work in this manner. First, perhaps the birth of democracy demands the death of the state as we have known it in the West, the oligarchic state legitimated by an extremely effective appeal to *individual* liberty, an ideological appeal rendering invisible the particular ways and full extent to which human wealth is always *social* wealth, that is, the cumulative achievement of many acting in concert, mostly unacknowledged, with one another. The fair distribution of social wealth is made virtually impossible when questions pertaining to such distribution are viewed through the distorting lenses of oligarchic liberalism. The very posing of the question in terms of <u>re</u>distribution so deeply and systematically biases this question in favor of those who have. A self-deception related to this question, since it concerns those who take themselves to be among those who have a great deal and thus those who have a deep stake in the maintenance of oligarchic liberalism, is this. 19% of individuals in the United States take themselves to be in the top 1% of income right now. 20% of US citizens suppose themselves to be *very soon* in this top 1%. This means that virtually 40% of our population takes itself to be in or almost in the top 1%. This is a

distorted judgment with far-reaching consequences and deep-rooted conditions, material and ideological.

Second, perhaps the possibility of conducting a more encompassing and effective war against war, of truly finding the moral equivalent of war, demands nothing less than the birth of democracy, on various levels, many of which need to intersect effectively.

Finally, perhaps democracy is itself the moral equivalent of war in a way not yet adequately imagined – or even imaged in any of the arts – the ideal of democracy not as a ready-made excuse for going to still another war, but this ideal as a yet to be achieved community of individuals and also of communities (including a community of nations), a community in which the stronger units are not allowed to bully and bribe the weaker ones to join, against everyone's ultimate interest (cf. Schell), yet another campaign of counterterrorism.

Conclusion

We of course owe to William James the expression "the moral equivalent of war." But we owe to his brother Henry the testimony of a witness on the eve of the First World War. Let us, therefore, recall Henry James' words in a letter written on August 10, 1914, that is, on the cusp of the war to end all wars:

> Black and hideous to me is the tragedy that gathers, and I'm sick beyond cure to have lived to see it. You and I … should have been spared this wreck of our belief that through the long years we had seen civilization grow and the worst become impossible. The tide that bore us along was then all the while moving us to *this* as its grand Niagara – yet what a blessing we didn't know it. It seems to me to undo everything, everything that was ours, in the most horrible retroactive way – but I avert my face from the monstrous scene. (Quoted in Jonathan Schell, *Harper's* [March 2003], 34)

Let us at this juncture, however, *not* curse our time, *nor* avert our face from the monstrous scenes gathering in our own dark times. Let us not curse our time. Let us rather curse the time that will be the fate of our children and grandchildren, also *their* children and grandchildren, if we allow the new order to be defined by unilateral militarism, an ever escalating militarism integral to the defense of the global injustices constitutive of oligarchic liberalism.

Let us curse pragmatically. At any rate, I intend to curse in this manner. I will be damned if the name of my country becomes the most hated word in the world, especially in the ears of those conducting people's wars. I will be damned if those most responsible for the global war system think they can get away with their lies, manipulations, bullying, and violence without a protest from me and everyone else not on Death's payroll. From this point forward this will be not an episodic, fragmented protest but a sustained,

collaborative cry of those committed to the quotidian realization of the democratic ideal.[7] These curses are the cries of those in labor – those struggling to give birth to democracy.

I will be damned if anyone in power comfortably supposes that the global war system can unfold according to its irredeemably stupid logic without my voice and being pitted against it.

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[7] In an excerpt in *Harper's* (March 2003) from an Introduction to a forthcoming book *Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics* by David Levi Strauss, John Berger argues, the first step "for thinking politically on a global scale is to see the unity of the unnecessary suffering taking place. This is the starting point" (14). He goes on to argue: "The next step is to reject all the tyranny's discourse. Its terms are crap. In the interminably speeches, announcements, press conferences, and threats, the recurrent terms are: Democracy, Justice, Human Rights, Terrorism. Each word in the context signifies the opposite of what it was once meant to. Each has been trafficked; each has become a gang's code word, stolen from humanity. Democracy is a proposal (rarely realized about decision-making; it has little to do wit election campaigns. Etc." (14-15). But he later adds: "The new tyranny… depends, to a large degree, on a systematic abuse of language. Together we have to reclaim our hijacked words and reject the tyranny's nefarious euphemisms" (16).