Pacifism as Normative Theory

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Thanks...
Fiala work on Just War, Pacifism, and Nonviolence

Past President of Concerned Philosophers for Peace

Typical Normative Theories

• Natural Law
• Virtue Ethics
• Utilitarianism
• Kantian deontology
• Social Contract
• Care Ethics

Other Theories

• Feminism
• Applied Ethics
  • Just War
  • Realism
  • Pacifism
Current state of Philosophical Research
From “Philosopher’s Index” (Oct 2018)

- Pacifism: 441 hits
- Nonviolence: 436 hits
- Peace: 2,849 hits
- War: 8,037 hits
- Just war: 998 hits

Three Moral Approaches to War and Peace

- **Pacifism**: War is Never Justified
- **Just War**: War is justified but there are moral limits
- **Realism**: Moral justification does not apply to war
A More Complicated Picture

Absolute Pacifism  Contingent/Just War Pacifism  Just War  Limited War Realism  Anything Goes Realism

A new model  Pacifism as Moral Theory

Pacifism

Realism

Justified Violence
Pacifism:
A comprehensive moral theory connected with a critical social theory and organized in a coherent tradition

1. The Ideal Principle of Pacifism: Peace is the highest good. Human beings ought to seek peace, to live in peace, and to develop non-violent means of conflict resolution that respect the liberty, rationality, and autonomy of persons.

2. The Critique of Violence: Violence is limited as a means for promoting peace because it is irrational and negative and thus unable by itself to build a positive and lasting peace.

3. The Call for Non-violence: The preferred means of activity are non-violent. We ought to strive for a coherent system of means and ends. If peace is our end, then the means employed should be non-violent.

Objections: Militarism & Warism

- A long peace generally brings about a predominant commercial spirit, and along with it, low selfishness, cowardice, and effeminacy.
  - Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (1790)

- The peace-prattlers are in no way blessed. On the contrary, only mischief has sprung from the activities of the professional peace-prattlers, the ultra-pacifists, who, with the shrill clamor of eunuchs, preach the gospel of the milk and water of virtue.
  - Theodore Roosevelt, “America and the War” (1915)
Other Objections
See Fiala, “Pacifism” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

- Pacifism only makes sense in an ideal world where there is no war or criminal aggression and in which people are persuaded by arguments and acts of conscience.
- Pacifism is inconsistent and incoherent since it claims to value life but refuses to do what is necessary to defend life.
- Pacifism is immoral when it ignores the real world need to respond to violence with violence and when it thus “allows” innocents to be killed.
- Pacifism is defended from within a bubble of privilege that ignores the groans of the oppressed, the demand for revolution, and the violence that undergirds the status quo.

Pacifism and Nonviolence as a Normative Tradition: A Conversation about The Good

- Jesus, Socrates, The Buddha
- Erasmus, Menno Simmons, George Fox, William Penn, Abbé Saint-Pierre, Immanuel Kant
- Adin Ballou, Leo Tolstoy, Mohandas K. Gandhi
- Jane Addams, William James, Englantyne Jebb, Dorothy Day, Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein, Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King, Jr., James Lawson, Daniel Berrigan, Cesar Chavez, Thomas Merton, Thich Nhat Hahn, Desmond Tutu, Pope John Paul II, Pope Francis, the Dalai Lama, John Howard Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas, Arne Naess, Johan Galtung, Robert Holmes, Andrew FitzGibbon, Barry Gan... Etc.
Pacifist Organizations

Example: Eglantyne Jebb (1876-1928)

• 1919: “Save the Children”
• 1924: League of Nations, Declaration of the Rights of the Child

• “Every war is a war against children.”
• “The only international language is a child's cry.”
• “ Humanity owes the child the best it has to give.”
One Traditional Source of Pacifism: Christianity

“Beati pacifici”: “Blessed are the pacifists, they shall be called children of God”
(Matthew 5:9)

- Greek: eirenopoios
  - eirênê and poiesis
- Latin: pacifici
  - paci- (pax = peace) – ficus (making)

The Christian Pacifist Tradition

- Quakers, Mennonites, etc.
- New Developments in Catholicism
  - “Landmark Vatican conference rejects just war theory, asks for encyclical on nonviolence” National Catholic Reporter, Apr 14, 2016
  - “This is the fruit of war: death”—Pope Francis
    - “War brings only death, cruelty, pope says at U.S. military cemetery” National Catholic Reporter, Nov 2, 2017
  - “Nonviolence is a great way to talk about love. That is the love of God, the love of life, the love of one another.”
The Christian Pacifist Tradition

- “Pacifism is not just one specific position, spoken for authoritatively by just one thinker. Instead, it is a wide gamut of views that vary and are sometimes even contradictory”

The Other Half of the Conversation

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.
(Matthew 10:34)

The episode of the whip in the temple (John 2:15; Matt 21:12)

Paul, Letter to the Romans (13: 3-4)
For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? ...But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer.
### Peace as Philosophical Problem

**What is peace?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Cooperation</th>
<th>Wholeness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Tranquility</td>
<td>Happiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td>Serenity</td>
<td>Love</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Fullness</td>
<td>Joy</td>
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- Related questions:
  - What is violence?
  - What is war?

- Conceptual Issues:
  - Positive Peace
  - Negative Peace
  - Institutional/Structural Violence
  - Hot Wars, Cold Wars, etc.

### 1. Peace as the Highest Good

- Greek tranquility, serenity, and contemplation
- Plato and Aristotle: contemplation is the highest good
  - Self-sufficient, complete, peaceful
- Epicurus: tranquility
  - Ataraxia = non-disturbed-ness
- Stoicism
  - Apatheia and Eupatheia = serenity of emotional control
Peace as the Highest Good

• **Plato** (428 – 347 BCE)
  • The truth is that in war we do not find, and we never shall find, either any real play or any real education worth the name, and these are the things I count supremely serious for such creatures as ourselves.
  • Hence it is peace (*eirênên*) in which each of us should spend most of his life and spend it best.
    • Plato, *The Laws*

Other Sources

Pseudo-Dionysius
The Areopagite
c. 500-600 CE

Thomas Aquinas
1225-1274

Meister Johan Eckhart
(1260 - 1328)
Peace as unfolding of the life process

- Peace has come to be a larger thing. It is no longer merely the absence of war, but the unfolding of life processes which are making for a common development. Peace is not merely something to hold congresses about and to discuss as an abstract dogma. It has come to be a rising tide of moral feeling, which is slowly engulfing all pride of conquest and making war impossible.

  - ‘Democracy or Militarism’ in Jane Addams’s Essays and Speeches on Peace (London: Continuum, 2005, p. 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jane Addams</th>
<th>Leo Tolstoy</th>
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<tr>
<td>1860-1935</td>
<td>1828-1920</td>
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Peace as Philosophical Dialogue and Contemplation

- Dialogue as a Practice of Peace
  - Socrates, Buber, etc.
- Letting Beings Be, Gelassenheit
  - Eckhart, Heidegger, Taoism,
- Inner Peace, Mindfulness, Tranquility, ataraxia
  - Aristotle, Epicurean, Stoic, Buddhist
    - For its own sake
    - A God-like activity
    - Free from strife, conflict, turmoil
2. Critique of Violence And Critical Social Theory

- In domestic life, family and sexual relations
- In our relation to the natural world
- In business and economic life
- In political life within nations
- In international relations

“Peace Studies”

- Gene Sharp
  - 198 different methods of nonviolent action to bring about social change
- Johan Galtung
  - Negative Peace = absence of violence
  - Positive Peace = full well-being (*shalom*)
  - Cultural Violence
  - Structural Violence
3. Making Peace
How do we “make peace” in emergencies?

- Non-Resistance
- Non-Violent Activism
- Justified Violence

Love and forcible resistance to evil-doers, involve such a mutual contradiction as to destroy utterly the whole sense and meaning of the conception of love... (Tolstoy, “Letter to a Hindu” 1908)

Non-violence is therefore, in its active form, goodwill towards all life. It is pure Love. I read it in the Hindu scriptures, in the Bible, in the Koran. Gandhi, ”Nonviolence” (1922)

Making Peace through Social Transformation via Critical Social Theory
- Militarism and Military-Industrial Complex
- Economic, Social, and Political Violence
- Crime and Systems of Punishment
- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Violence and Domination
- Cultural Violence
- Psychological and Spiritual Violence
- Violence to animals and nature
Pacifism as Moral Theory

[Diagram showing the relationship between Pacifism, Realism, and Justified Violence]
Future Research

• The “Capitalist Peace” and the “Democratic Peace”

• Nonviolence and bioethics

• Nonviolence, democracy, and education

• Peace and future generations: climate change and environmental issues