

LET'S NOT RESTART THE TROJAN WAR
Kant's "perpetual peace" and Hegel's "dialectic of the spirits of peoples"

Inaugural Lecture of The Philosophy Semester - CCHLA- UFPB - 03/12/2024¹

Dignum et decorum est pro patria mori.
Si vis pacem, para bellum
Roman maxims

Nos quarteis lhes ensinam a antiga lição
de morrer pela pátria e viver sem razão.
Geraldo Vandrê

Dulce bellum inexpertis
Erasmus Rotterdam

Stringiamci a coorte siam pronti alla morte,
siam pronti alla morte l'Italia chiamò. Sì
Inno Nazionale Italiano

Cadesti a terra senza un lamento e
ti accorgesti in un solo momento
che la tua vita finiva quel giorno e
non ci sarebbe stato ritorno².
Canzone di Piero
Fabrizio de André

Dedicated to my master and friend Danilo
Zolo who, when dealing with the subject of war
predicted that we are heading "towards a global sunset".
In memoriam³

Giuseppe Tosi

It is a great honour and a great responsibility to deliver the inaugural lecture of the semester of the Philosophy course. I am grateful for the presence of the students and colleagues from the Department where I taught for over 30 years and was very well received. I owe a huge debt to the Department, to UFPB, to Paraíba and to Brazil that I haven't been able to fulfil.

(1) I would like to thank Prof Abah Andrade for his corrections form and suggestions on content that improved the text.

² Piero, the soldier, "fell to the ground without a whimper and realised in a single moment that his life was over that day and there would be no turning back".

³ ZOLO, Danilo. *Rumo ao ocaso global*. Direitos Humanos, o Medo e a Guerra. São Paulo: Ed. Conceito, 2011. Organised by Maria Luiza Alencar Feitosa and Giuseppe Tosi.

As I always say: if Brazilians who go to Italy were welcomed as I was in Brazil, the world would be a much better place.

I couldn't begin this lecture without remembering the dear people who have left us: Prof Giovanni Queiroz, one of the most brilliant minds I've ever known, who left us prematurely; Prof Heleno Cesarino, who studied in Germany and was a Hegel scholar; and Henrique Muratcho, a profound Greek scholar who produced a reference grammar and taught in postgraduate courses for years. This lecture is dedicated to their memory.

The topic I've chosen is extremely topical given the upsurge in armed conflicts in recent times: war.

Simone Weil wrote:

We live in a time when the relative security that a certain technical mastery over nature guarantees mankind is far outweighed by the danger of wars and devastation caused by conflicts between human groups. If this danger is so serious, we owe it in part to the power of the instruments of destruction that technology has made available to us; however, these instruments don't work on their own and it's not fair to make inert matter bear the brunt of a situation for which we bear full responsibility⁴.

Simone Weil wrote these words at the end of the 1930s, shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War. But they are still extremely relevant. It seems that the tragic experience of two world wars has not been enough to contain and even less to eliminate war from the face of the earth. We're not going to dwell here the reasons for today's wars, which we'll leave to the analysis of geopolitical experts, who are always more in demand today in the media to try to understand where humanity is heading (most likely towards catastrophe). Let's reflect on the ontological and anthropological foundations of war.

The indisputable fact is that wars have always existed. The question is whether they will continue to exist. This answer depends on the justifications for the existence of war or its abolition; whether they are an evil to be avoided, or a necessity that cannot be eliminated, whether they contribute to the "progress of humanity" or to its destruction.

To answer these questions, we will begin by analysing the thought of two great philosophers: Immanuel Kant and George Friederich Hegel.

1. Kant, cosmopolitan law and Perpetual Peace⁵

Kant did not write a *Critique of Political Reason* along the lines of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Critique of Judgement*, but he did leave several writings on history⁶, politics⁷ and law⁸ that are relevant to the foundation of a cosmopolitan vision of international relations⁹.

⁴ WEIL, Simone. *Non ricominciamo la guerra di Troia*. In *Il libro del potere*. Milano: Chiarelettere, 2022, p. 47-76. See also: WEIL, S. *Sulla Guerra. Writings 1933-1943*. Milano: Il Saggiatore, 2017.

⁵ On realism and cosmopolitanism see: TOSI, G. *Realism and cosmopolitanism in international relations*. In: SANTORO, E. - ZENAIDE, M. N. T. - BATISTA, G. B. de M. - TONEGUTTI, R. G. *Direitos Humanos em uma época de insegurança*. Porto Alegre, Tomo Editorial, 2010, pp. 39-58.

⁶ KANT, I., *Idéia de uma história universal do ponto de vista cosmopolita* (1784), Ricardo Ribeiro Terra, (org.), São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1986.

⁷ KANT, I., *À Paz Perpétua*, In: *A Paz Perpétua e outros opúsculos*, (1796), Lisbon: Edições 70, p. 133.

⁸ KANT, I. *A Doutrina do Direito*. São Paulo: Ícone, 1993.

⁹ KANT, I. *Scritti di storia, politica e diritto*. A cura di Filippo Gonnelli, Bari: Laterza, 2007. For a debate on the "pertinence" or "divergence" of Kant's writings on politics with the whole of his work, see ANDRADE, Abah. *The Formation of the Contemporary Subject*: Vol. 2. Kant. Tensions of Modernity. Rubaiyat Edições, 2020 (Kindle).

For Kantian transcendental idealism, politics belongs to the realm of "ideas" or "ideals" of reason and deals with the conditions of possibility of human coexistence to realise the "hidden end of nature" which is the moral and legal progress of humanity. Politics, therefore, cannot be limited to the consideration of what exists, but must indicate a must-be, a *telos* which, for Kant, is, in the internal sphere, the creation of the Republican Civil State and, in the international sphere, the realisation of cosmopolitan law as a guarantee of peace that is not a truce between two wars, but something permanent: perpetual peace¹⁰.

Kant, as the greatest thinker of the Enlightenment, maintained his confidence in the possibility of moral and legal progress for humanity and proposed a "philosophical or prophetic history of humanity"¹¹ that would identify an event in the empirical history of mankind that could serve as a sign of this progress: as we know, for the philosopher from Königsberg, this event was the French Revolution¹².

Kant detects a legal vacuum in relations between nations, which behave towards each other as if they were in a permanent State of war, interrupted only by periods of truce, but not true peace. This void must be filled with a new type of law, *jus cosmopolitanum*, a supranational law in which not only States but also individuals would be subjects with rights¹³. The philosophical project of *To Perpetual Peace* proposes the "regulatory ideal" of a World Federation of freely constituted national States that would promote common institutions to regulate their relations.

In his first comment (1793)¹⁴, Kant believes that the "only solution" to the State of war between nations would be the creation of a Universal People's State.

¹⁰ Kant's immediate antecedents on the subject are: SAINT-PIERRE, Abbé de. *A Project to Make Peace Perpetual in Europe*. Brasília: Editora da UNB, 2003 (IPRI Classics). ROUSSEAU, J. J. Extract and judgement of the project of Perpetual Peace. In *Rousseau and International Relations*. Brasília: Editora UNB, 2003 (IPRI Classics), p. 69-110.

¹¹ KANT, I. *Renewed question: Is the human race in constant progress towards the best?* In *The Conflict of the Faculties*. Lisbon: Edições 70, p. 96-112.

¹² See: BOBBIO, N. Kant e a Revolução Francesa, In: *A Era dos Direitos*, Rio de Janeiro: Campus, 1992, pp. 131-142. Bobbio asks himself: "Is there still any point in proposing the problem of the meaning of history? [...] It is only possible to give an answer this question the purpose of history by looking for a pre-established project, to be attributed to a collective subject, be it Providence, Reason, Nature, or the Spirit of the World", which in contemporary philosophy, in its fragmentation, has lost its justification". And Bobbio introduces the three types of history according to Kant: **conjectural history, empirical history and prophetic history**. The first is a purely conjectural reconstruction of the course of history, based not on facts but on indications. The second is the history of historians who proceed by cause and effect; the third is history that seeks to find an extraordinary event that becomes a sign of a trend in humanity considered as a whole.

¹³ KANT, I., *Metaphysics of Custom. Doctrine of Law*, São Paulo: Ícone, 1993. Kant divides public law into internal public law or the law of citizenship, external public law or the law of nations (*ius gentium*) and cosmopolitical law or the law of citizens of the world (*Ius cosmopolitanum*), "due to the fact that the earth is not infinite, but a limited surface in itself" (p. 149-150), and due to the fact that "nature has enclosed all men together by means of the round shape it has given to their common domicile" (p. 201). "This right, as the possible union of all peoples, with regard to certain universal laws of their possible trade, can be called *cosmopolitical right*", p. 201-202. See also: TERRA, R. R., *Política tensa, Idéia e realidade na filosofia da história de Kant*, São Paulo: Iluminuras, 1995. ROHDEN, V. (org.) *Kant and the institution of peace*. Porto Alegre: Ed. UFRGS, Goethe-Institut/ICBA, 1997.

¹⁴ See: KANT, I., On the common expression: this may be correct in theory, but it is worthless in practice, (1793), In. *A Paz Perpétua e outros opúsculos*, Lisbon: Edições 70, 1990, pp. 58-102 ("On the relationship of theory to practice in the law of nations, considered from a universal, id est. cosmopolitan, philanthropic point of view").

Later (1795/96), he began to advocate not just a Universal State of the People, but a Universal Federation of free States:

This Federation is not intended to obtain the power of the State, but simply to maintain and guarantee the peace of a State for itself and, at the same time, for the other federated States, without the latter having to submit to public law and its protection. It is possible to represent the feasibility (objective reality) of the *Federation*, which should gradually extend to all the States and thus lead to permanent peace. After all, if the law stipulates that **a strong and enlightened people can form a republic** (which, according to its nature, must tend towards perpetual peace) this can constitute the centre of the federative association so that all the other States can come together around it and thus ensure the State of liberty of the States in accordance with the idea of right of the people and extending ever further through other union ¹⁵.

In a passage from the same book, Kant justifies this change of focus by saying that the idea of a World State would be the best in theory, but it would seem unrealistic and therefore it is preferable to adopt the idea of a Federation with its successor¹⁶

States with reciprocal relations with each other have, according to reason, no other means of getting out of the lawless situation, which is simply war, without the need to recognise public laws, in the same way that individual men surrender their wild freedom (without laws), and form a State of the people (*civitas gentium*) which (it is always clear that it is growing) would encompass all the people of earth. But if, in agreement with their idea of the law of the people, this is not what they want, then if they reject in *hypothesis* what is correct *in thesi*, then the *torrent* of danger for injustice and enmity can only be stopped, not by the positive idea of a *world republic* (if everything is to be lost), but by the *negative* success of a *federation* antagonistic to war, permanent and in continuous expansion, despite the constant danger of its ¹⁶.

We'll see later to what extent this Kantian project has been realised today. But now let's analyse a radically different position: that of Hegel.

2. George Friederich Hegel: Political Realism and the Dialectic of the Spirits of Peoples

A different view from Kant's is that of Hegel, an idealist in metaphysics but a realist in politics. For Hegel, as for Hobbes, the only subjects of international law are sovereign States and, secondarily, world-historical individuals such as Caesar and Napoleon.

In Hegel, the State becomes the "incarnation" of the Objective Spirit on earth: "The people, as a State, is the Spirit in its substantial rationality and in its immediate effectiveness, and is therefore **the absolute force** on *earth*; a State is consequently in relation to others in sovereign autonomy"¹⁷.

¹⁵ IDEM, p. 135.

¹⁶ 20 IDEM, p. 136

¹⁷ HEGEL, G. F. *Filosofia do Direito*. São Leopoldo: Edições UNISINOS, 2010, p. 301.

Hegel divides external public law into External State Law, where the State acts as a "particular individual in relation to other particular individuals", and **World History**, where "these particular spirits are only **moments** in the development of the universal idea of Spirit in its effective reality"¹⁸. The State of war is the "natural" condition, the result of power relations between sovereign States that behave as individuals in reciprocal relations.

The State, as a singular individual, is *exclusive* in relation to *other* similar individuals. In their reciprocal *relationship*, arbitrariness and accidentality take place, because the *universal* of law, by virtue of the autonomous totality of these people, *must* only exist between them, but is not *real*. This independence makes the struggle between them a relationship of force, a *situation of war*, for which the universal order is decided by the end of preserving the autonomy of the State in relation to others, by the order of bravery¹⁹.

Hegel does not allow relations between States to subsist in a vacuum of law, he justifies this condition with the concept of World History (*weltgeschichte*), which is the result of the "dialectic of the spirits of particular peoples, (*volkgeistes*) that is, *the judgement of the world*"²⁰ in which the State that, at that historical moment, realises the Spirit of the World prevails. In the face of its absolute right, the rights of other States simply cease to exist²¹.

He concludes the exposition of his conception of Universal History by stating that:

The self-consciousness of a particular people is the support of the degree of development of the universal spirit in its existence and the objective reality in which it places its will. In the face of this absolute will, the will of the other spirits of particular peoples is without right: that people is dominator of the world; but the universal spirit each time goes beyond its property as a particular step and then abandons that people to its chance and judgement²².

The dialectic of the spirits of the peoples, or to put it another way, **war**, is the necessary condition to allow the "spirit to advance until it reaches itself and realises its truth, and the attainment of that truth is the highest and absolute *right*"²³.

Hegel is therefore rightly part of the realist tradition which, from Machiavelli to Max Weber and Carl Schmitt, via Hobbes and Spinoza, thinks of international politics in terms of the balance of power relations and hegemony between sovereign States, and is one of the greatest critics of philosophical projects, such as Kant's, which imagined a universal republic or a world government governed by a law superior to State law, an "ultra-State" and cosmopolitan type of law.

Hegel writes about Kant's *Perpetual Peace*:

The *Kantian* representation of a *perpetual peace*, through a league of States, which would arbitrate every dispute and regulate every disagreement as a force recognised by all the States.

¹⁸ HEGEL, G. W. F. *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Epitome* [1817]. Lisbon: Edições 70, 1990, § 536, p. 131.

¹⁹ IDEM, § 545, p. 145.

²⁰ IDEM, § 548, p. 147.

²¹ See: DUSSEL, Enrique. *1492: o encobrimento do Outro*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1993. Dussel shows how Hegel ended up justifying the conquest of America through Spain's right at the time to dominate the world as the historical realisation of the absolute Spirit.

²² HEGEL, G. W. F. *Encyclopaedia ...op. cit.*, § 550, p. 152.

²³ IDEM, *Ibidem*.

It presupposes the agreement of States [...] which in general always rests on the sovereign will and is therefore permanently affected by contingency²⁴.

For Hegel, the Federation of States proposed by Kant would always depend on the sovereign will and agreement of each State, which is something "contingent", always subject to a possible and permanent threat of dissolution. This is why Hegel says: "The dispute of States, insofar as the particular wills cannot find any agreement, can only be decided by war"²⁵.

He goes on to criticise Kant's cosmopolitan proposal:

Perpetual peace is the ideal that humanity should strive for. *Kant* thus proposed a Federation of Princes, which should smooth out litigation between States. The Holy Alliance was intended to be a similar institution. But the State is the individual, and individuality essentially contains negation. Therefore, even if a certain number of States constitute themselves as a family, this union, as individuality, must create an opposition and generate an **enemy**.⁽²⁶⁾

Well before Carl Schmitt's elaboration, Hegel had defined the friend/enemy relationship as something essential and inevitable in relations between States. And he concludes with a phrase that has become famous: "In spite of everything, wars happen, as they are in the nature of things; the seeds open up once more and the chatter falls silent in **faced with the history's harsh retorts**"²⁷. By chatter here, Hegel means *Kant-like* ideals of perpetual peace and moralistic and pacifist rhetoric.

The two philosophies of history affirm that there is something profound in human history, which acts "in absentia" and which Kant calls the "hidden end of nature" and Hegel the "cunning of reason". But despite this convergence, there is a profound divergence between them: for Kant this end is an idea or ideal of reason, something possible but not necessary, which may or may not be realised and which depends on men.

For Hegel, it is something necessary that is written into the nature of human relations, because what Hegel calls "Reason in history" is a secularisation of the concept of Divine Providence: it is God as Idea or Spirit that governs history. Under this assumption, what Kant thinks of as what can be, Hegel describes the opposite as simply being all possible reality.

3. Which of the two paradigms best interprets the current situation regarding war?

To answer this question, we need to analyse two different positions on the central issue of **State sovereignty**.

The end of the Second World War saw the end of what Carl Schmitt defined as *jus publicum europaeum*, characterised by the absolute sovereignty of States that did not recognise any higher authority. This paradigm, according to the German philosopher he promoted three important changes: a secularization, a rationalization and a humanization of war.

²⁴ HEGEL, G. F. *Filosofia do Direito*. São Leopoldo: Edições UNISINOS, 2010, p.303.

²⁵ IDEM, *Ibidem*.

²⁶ This extract from Hegel's Philosophy of Right is an addition to § 324, which is not translated in the Brazilian edition, which the author translated from the Italian. In GALLI, C. *Guerra*. Bari: Laterza, 2004, p.137.

²⁷ IDEM, *ibidem*.

The first characteristic means the end of holy wars, promoted in the name of religion: there is a **secularisation** of the doctrine of war, which is removed from the competence of theologians, with the separation of State and Church and the end of just wars, which required a *super partes* arbitrator to define which of the contenders was right²⁸. This is relatively true, although the German SS in the Second World War had motto *Got mit uns* (God is with us) and the Catholic and Protestant priests each blessed the cannons and troops of their countries (all Christians!).

There is a **rationalisation** of war: organising, ritualising, formalising, delimiting, through the law, the scope of what is legitimate in the event of war, as Schmitt States, which gives the overcoming of the just war doctrine great historical relevance, because of all the causes of just war, only one remains: legitimate authority. Any sovereign State, by definition, has the right to declare war (*jus ad bellum*); what can be regulated is behaviour during war (*jus in bello*).

The third change and the most surprising is, according to Schmitt, the **humanisation** of war:

Compared to the brutality of religious and party wars, which by their nature are wars of annihilation and in which enemies discriminate against each other as criminals and pirates and compared to colonial wars waged against "savage" peoples, this means a rationalisation and humanisation with profound effects (SCHMITT, 2014, p. 151).

It is hard to see how the thesis that formalisation has allowed, in addition to secularisation and rationalisation, a "humanisation" of war can be sustained historically. The long period of more than 300 years, from the Peace of Westphalia in 1634 to the Second World War, was characterised by countless armed conflicts between sovereign States, such as the Napoleonic Wars, and was undoubtedly a period marked by continuous wars that were as bloody and annihilating as the medieval and Renaissance ones, due to the technological development of the destructive power of weapons, but also to the absolute power of sovereigns to proclaim war, which formalisation and rationalisation did not limit or humanise its destructive effects.

In addition to this obvious paradox, what is most striking is Schmitt's "deafening silence" about the ideology and regime to which he adhered for a time and which cost him his imprisonment and trial at Nuremberg²⁹: Nazism, a regime that represents the exact opposite of the humanisation of war. Schmitt criticises the criminalisation of war and the return of the just war theory on the part of the victorious powers (which had brought him to trial at Nuremberg); but he says nothing on Nazism, which created not the *justus hostis*, but the **absolute enemy** that should be and was systematically and "scientifically" annihilated tens of millions of people.

Contrary to Schmitt's view, the absolute sovereignty of States was seen as one of the main reasons for the outbreak of the two world conflicts and attempts were made to create an international order that would create supra-State power to avoid a third world war: the United Nations Organisation and later the European Union.

²⁸ CASSI, A. A. *Santa, Giusta, Umanitaria*. La guerra nella civiltà occidentale. Salerno Editore: 2015.

²⁹ On this period, see his "defence" in SCHMITT, C. *Ex captivitate salus*. Esperienze 1945-47. Milano: Adelphi, 1993.

3.1. The United Nations Organisation - UN

On 25 April 1945, in San Francisco, the UN was officially created, which had been desired, promoted and to some extent "imposed" by the victorious powers of the Second World War, above all the United States.³⁰ The preamble to the United Nations Charter reads as follows:

WE, THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS, RESOLVED

to preserve future generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold suffering to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human being, in the equal rights of men and women³¹ as well as of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for treaty obligations and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better living conditions within a broad freedom.

AND FOR SUCH PURPOSES,

to practice tolerance and live in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our forces to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force will not be used in the common interest, to employ an international mechanism to promote the economic and social progress of all peoples³²

The Charter creates a **General Assembly** (Chapter IV), where every State in the world is represented, and where each member State has one vote; the **Security Council** (Chapter V), made up of 15 member States, five of which are permanent members - China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, the victorious powers of World War II, which has veto power. The **Secretariat** (Chap. XV), made up of the Secretary General and other members of the UN staff, who are appointed by the General Assembly, after having been recommended by the Security Council, and directs the Security Council, the General Assembly and has broad powers to represent the UN in cases of international conflict³³.

Although the Charter begins with a solemn declaration: "We, the **peoples** of the United Nations", the UN is substantially an organisation not of peoples, but States and governments. The proposed reforms towards greater citizen participation in the General Assembly and the democratisation of the Security Council have failed, because the big powers don't want to lose control over the most important decisions of the Assembly.

³⁰ See: UN. UN Charter. Available at:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Organisation>.

³¹ Brazil's representative at the 1945 San Francisco Conference was the Brazilian scientist Bertha Lutz, sent by the Getúlio Vargas government, one of the few women present and who played an important role in getting gender equality included in the UN Charter. See: <<https://nacoesunidas.org/carta/>>.

³² In: <<https://nacoesunidas.org/carta/>>.

³³ The UN system also includes the International Court of Justice, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council and other specialised institutions such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the FAO (Organization and), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), the World Bank and the World Health Organisation. Supporting the UN are the Regional Human Rights Systems, the main ones being the European and American Regional Systems.

Another major issue concerns military power: the founders of the UN, coming out of the biggest war conflict in history, understood this was the most important condition. The UN had to have some kind of military power to impose the necessary sanctions on States that disobeyed its statutes. It's the old Hobbes lesson from *Leviathan*. The *jus gentium* preaches the age-old principle that *pacta sunt servanda*, but Hobbes warns that "Covenants without the sword are but words, without force to give any security to anyone" (HOBBS, 2003, p. 143).

Chapters VI and VII are mainly dedicated to this central issue. Chapter VI is dedicated to the "peaceful settlement of disputes" between nations, which may be submitted, depending on the situation, to the International Court of Justice (art. 36) or to the Security Council³⁴.

The whole of Chapter VII is dedicated to resolving conflicts when peaceful mediation fails: "Action Concerning Threats to the Peace, Breach of the Peace and Acts of Aggression". The measures to prevent a "breach of the peace" or aggression by one State against another go from strength to strength: from measures without the use of armed force, such as: "the complete or partial interruption of economic relations, of the means of communication by rail, sea, air, post, telegraph, radio or any other means, and the severance of diplomatic relations" (art. 41); to measures with the use of armed force, such as: "the complete or partial interruption economic relations, of the means of communication by rail, sea, air, post, telegraph, radio or any other means, and the severance of diplomatic relations" (art. 41). 41); up to measures using force: "Such action may include demonstrations, blockades and other operations by the air, naval or land forces of the members of the United Nations" (art. 42).

To this end, the Security Council will be supported by a General Staff: "The General Staff Commission shall be composed of the Chiefs of Staff of the permanent members of the Security Council or their representatives" (Art. 47). To make these actions effective, the UN reserves the right to request, under its command, contingents from the armed forces of States (Art. 43).

It is in this context of the use of force to mediate conflicts that the UN created its own military contingent, made up of soldiers from member States to work conflict mediation, the so-called "blue helmets", which emerged after the Charter in 1963 to carry out peace missions of various types: *peacemaking*, *peacekeeping*, *peacebuilding* and *peace enforcement*, depending on the situation (LUCUTA, 2014).

The UN Armed Forces General Staff has never existed effectively and permanently; in fact, it is the major powers, with or without the consent of the Security Council, that carry out military actions.

If we look at this perspective after almost eighty years of the UN's existence and use Hobbes' categories in relation to the social *pact*, we could say that there was a pact of union (*pactum unionis*) between all the States of the world, gathered in the General Assembly, but there was no real pact of submission (*pactum subjectionis*) on the part of the member States delegating the monopoly of legitimate force to a third party with effective powers³⁵: this is what Bobbio defines as "the absent third party" (BOBBIO, 2009).

³⁴"The parties to a dispute which may constitute a threat to international peace and security shall endeavour, first, to arrive at a settlement by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, recourse to regional bodies or arrangements, or any other peaceful means of their own choosing. (2) The Security Council shall, when it deems it necessary, invite the said parties to settle their disputes by such means (Art. 37)".

3.2. The European Union

The problem that must be solved first and foremost is the failure of which any other progress would only be a, is the definitive abolition of the division of Europe into sovereign national States³⁶.

These words are from the *Manifesto for a Free and United Europe*, better known as the *Ventotene Manifesto* because it was written and distributed clandestinely in 1941 by exiled anti-fascist prisoners on the island of Ventotene: a manifesto that is the first draft and embryo of the future European Union.

The **European Union** (EU) seems to follow “literally” the three definitive articles of *Perpetual Peace*³⁷:

1. The **civil constitution in every State must be republican**. Kant understands a republican form of government as one that guarantees the **freedom of** its members (as men), the **dependence of** all on a single common law (as subjects of the law) and **equality** before the law (as citizens), principles that are based on the original contract³⁸. Order to join the European Union, States must respect the democratic clauses, which is not always the case, as demonstrated by some States that are more like autocracies than democracies, or forms of populist democracy.
2. **The law of the people must be based on a federation of free States**. The EU is neither a Federation nor a Confederation, it is something *sui generis*, not very well defined, and it has **two tendencies** within it, as was clearly seen in the election for the European Parliament in June 2024. There are those in favour of more Europe and fewer sovereign States, with a view to achieving a United States of Europe; and the so-called “soveranists” who advocate less Europe and more State sovereignty and question European sovereignty, a proposal that is growing in several countries of the bloc.
3. **This Federation must submit to the cosmopolitan right understood by Kant as universal hospitality**; that is, “the right of a foreigner not to be treated with hostility by virtue of his coming to the territory of another”. We can understand this right more broadly, in the direction of a European Constitution: in fact, the EU has not been able to formally create a European Constitution, because some countries have not approved it through a referendum, but there are European treaties that regulate the EU and that act as a reference for all member States³⁹.

³⁵ For more information on the UN, see: <https://nacoesunidas.org/direitoshumanos/textos-explanatory/>
<https://nacoesunidas.org/>

³⁶ SPINELLI, Altiero, et al. *Manifesto per un'Europa Libera e Unità*, better known as the *Ventotene Manifesto*, 1941 (1944). Available at:

http://www.altierospinelli.org/manifesto/it/manifestoit_it.html(author's translation).

³⁷ AAVV. *Kant e l'idea di Europa*. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi. Genova: Il Melangolo. 6-8 July 2004,

³⁸ Kant doesn't use the word “democratic” because for him “democracy is, in the proper sense of the word, a despotism, because it establishes an executive power in which everyone decides, in any case, also against one (who therefore doesn't give his consent) so everyone, without, however being everyone, decides – which is a contradiction of the general will with itself and with freedom”, p. 133.

Despite its limits and shortcomings, the EU has achieved a **historic feat**: preventing wars between European countries and guaranteeing a lasting peace, the first peace after millennia of wars, since the *Pax Romana* of Emperor Caesar Augustus! The post-World War II generations had a life expectancy never seen before, not only because of the progress in medicine and nutrition, but also because, for the first time in history, they weren't massacred by wars like all previous generations!

A peace that has unfortunately been broken by Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, with unpredictable consequences for the European Union's own integration process, the threat of an *escalation* and expansion of the conflict, and the reality of an arms race. Instead of jointly combating global warming, social inequalities, pandemics and the tragedy of migration, the powers are investing **billions of dollars in the production of weapons of mass destruction**, without excluding the possibility of using atomic bombs!

4. The return of the dialectic of peoples' spirits!

Despite the EU's success in securing a long and relative peace internally, today the viewpoint of Hegelian realism, i.e. **the dialectic of spirits of peoples**, is prevailing in today's world of widespread conflicts and wars. The situation is alarming. In the 1980s and 1990s the United States and the Soviet Union, despite the Cold War, had signed treaties since 1987 to eliminate all atomic and conventional missiles: by 1991 the USSR and the USA had destroyed a total of almost 3.000 missiles.

After the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the West missed a great opportunity to continue disarmament and to abolish or profoundly reshape NATO.

Today, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, American missiles have once again been deployed in Europe, which means **the end of the era of disarmament**. The old logic of power politics is once again taking priority over the logic of dialogue and international cooperation treaties, which had characterised the last phases before the implosion of the USSR, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War⁴⁰.

These wars are seen as something necessary (or inevitable) for the "progress of humanity" and have world-historical peoples or individuals as their subjects.

In Hegel's view, history tends towards the progress of Spirit's self-consciousness in the triad of Subjective, Objective and Absolute Spirit, towards an ever-greater development of freedom. But if this is the case, what is the role of individuals in this history? What happens to the individuals who should be the true subjects of history? How does Hegel explain the mass death of these individuals, the existence of evil (and absolute evil) in history? He interprets it as a "negative **moment**" in the process of development of the dialectical triad that doesn't remain aporetic, unresolved as in Adorno and Horkheimer's negative dialectics, but is resolved in the synthesis and dialectical overcoming of opposites.

³⁹ See *Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe*. Luxembourg, 2003. This draft is the result of the "Convention on the future of Europe" convened by the European Council, which met in Laeken, Belgium on 14-15 December 2001.

⁴⁰ Information taken from: "Razzi a lungo raggio in Europa: il ritorno della Guerra fredda", by Lorenzo Cremonesi da Kiev. *Corriere della Sera*, 12 July 2024.

Hegel's philosophy of history is not concerned with the individuals who should be the true protagonists of history but with **hypostatized abstract subjects** like Providence, the Nation, the State, Nature, the Universal Spirit, the Homeland for which it is worthy and decorous to die (*Dignum et decorum est pro patria mori*). It is these abstract entities that govern long historical periods, but the history of the individuals crushed by this mechanism is short-lived: it begins when they open their eyes and ends when they close them!

Individuals are the victims of history: at this moment hundreds of thousands of people are dying because of internal or international wars, lives are ending, not mere numbers.

These are questions that don't find answers and that make us think that history has no meaning, but is "a pile of rubble,"⁴¹ as Hegel himself once recognised and Walter Benjamin affirmed in his "Theses on the Concept of History"⁴².

An impressive and mandatory reading for all generations are the "Letters from those sentenced to death from the European Resistance" (*Lettere dei condannati a morte della Resistenza Europea*. Prefazione di Thomas Mann. Torino: Einaudi, 1995). In them, one can read the tragic fate, especially of young people, faced with a cruel, unjust and premature death and, at the same time, the awareness that this death is consistent with one's own ideals of life and that it will not be in vain, but will promote a more just and peaceful world. A legacy that subsequent generations betrayed, did not know how to respect and that we are not following, in these times of war. A very hard reading, which leaves us deeply disturbed! WAR NEVER AGAIN!

5. History after Auschwitz

The question of the meaning of history after Auschwitz has been interpreted by three philosophers, in the case of the Hebrews, Hanna Arendt, Theódór Adorno and Hans Jónas.

Hannah Arendt tackles this question in the *Origins of Totalitarianism* and in *Eichmann in Jerusalem: The Banality of Evil*.⁴³ The philosopher's central thesis is that totalitarianism is a new political form, unprecedented in human history, in which the State is dominated by a single leader, a single party, a single ideology (nationalism, racism, communism) and through ideological propaganda and the police apparatus for repressing dissent, it controls all aspects of human life, much more than Hobbes' absolutism, because it totally invades the public and private spheres of its inhabitants, who cannot be defined citizens, because they do not have rights: The State has rights and the inhabitants have duties with him.

And he says that there are two kinds of totalitarianism, **the Nazi and the Stalinist**, which would open a debate on the difference between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.

⁴¹ HEGEL, G.F. *A Razão na História*. Trad. Artur Morão. Lisbon: Edições 70, 2013 [1822-31].

⁴² BENJAMIN, Walter. *Teses sobre o conceito de história* 1940: "There is a painting by Klee called Angelus Novus. It depicts an angel who seems to want to get away from something he is staring at. Its eyes are wide open, its mouth dilated, its wings spread. The angel of history must look like that. His face is directed towards the past. Where we see a chain of events, he sees a single catastrophe, which relentlessly piles up ruin upon ruin and scatters them at our feet. He would like to stop wake up the dead and gather up the fragments. But a storm blows from heaven and grips his wings so tightly that he can no longer close them. This storm pushes him irresistibly towards the future, to which he turns his back, **while the pile of ruins grows to the sky. This storm is what we call progress**".

⁴³ ARENDT, H. *Eichmann in Jerusalém*. Um ensaio sobre a banalidade do mal. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1999.

In *Eichmann in Jerusalem or the Banality of Evil*, Arendt develops the theme of the bureaucratisation of absolute evil, which becomes banal because it turns into a process of destruction, which becomes self-generating and self-feeding once the initial command has been given (which, by the way, has never been given in writing by Hitler!) in which each member carries out a particular task without understanding (or without wanting to understand) and controlling the whole process: each member is a part of a machine that works autonomously. This means that the subjects of the genocide are not held individually accountable as part of a wider whole, which they are obliged to respect for the penalty of their own death. A perverse mechanism carried out meticulously on a large scale.

Theodor Adorno, in *Education after Auschwitz*⁽⁴⁴⁾, denounces this infernal machine and addresses the rescue of historical memory as a permanent task to avoid repeating this tragic history. Adorno warns that Nazism as a political system has died out, but as an ideology continues to exist. Unfortunately, recent European (and world) events show the realisation of this possibility, which Umberto Eco had also detected when he said that there is an "eternal fascism", which is reappearing and expanding in many countries in a frightening way.

Hans Jonas, known for his studies on Gnosticism and the *Responsibility Principle*, wrote a short opus entitled *The Concept of God after Auschwitz*⁴⁵, in which he States that the attributes that the Jewish-Christian tradition places on God are fundamentally three: God is omnipotent, omniscient and good.

For Jonas, these attributes are not compatible, or God is omnipotent and omniscient, and therefore he is not good because he does not intervene to inhibit evil; but we cannot imagine a God evil, so if we want to preserve the concept of a good God and an omniscient God, we must deny God the attributes of omnipotence. God does not intervene in the world, there is no divine providence, God created man to be free and man is responsible for the wrong exercise of this freedom. Freedom is founded in the abyss of nothingness, is pure possibility of doing something; there are no instinctive and natural mechanisms in the human being that prohibit doing evil, but a certain aggressiveness is "natural" and has developed in the long process of humanisation.

6. Let's not start the Trojan War all over again

I would like to return to Simone Weil's quote at the opening of this essay, from which I borrowed the title of this talk: *Let's not Restart the Trojan War*. In fact, we can't restart the Trojan War because it's never over, it's always been over, existed. War permeates all of history and the *Iliad* is, in this sense, the founding paradigm of the West⁴⁶, as Simone Weil States:

The real hero, the real argument, the centre of the *Iliad* is **strength**. Force used by men. The force that subdues men, the force before which the flesh of men recoils [...] Those who delude themselves that force, thanks to progress, belongs to the past find in this poem a document; those who know how to recognise that force, today as in the past, is at the centre of every human story, find in it the most beautiful, the purest of mirrors⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ ADORNO, Theodor. *Educação e Emancipação*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 2008.

⁴⁵ JONAS, Hans. *O conceito de Deus após Auschwitz: uma voz judia*. São Paulo: Paulus Publishing House, 2016.
IDEM. *Il concetto di Dio dopo Auschwitz. Una voce Hebraica*. Genova: Il Belanglo, 1993.

For Simone Weil, force acts in two ways: ⁴⁸

It is force that turns anyone who is subjected to it into a thing. When it is exerted to the end, it transforms man into a thing in the literal sense of the term, it turns him into a **corpse**. [...] From the power to transform man into a thing by seeking death comes another power that is quite different: that of transforming a man who is alive into a thing. He is alive, he has a soul, but he is a thing⁴⁹.

The experiences of the two world wars, the Holocaust, the Shoa, the concentration camps, the millions of human beings annihilated are the most radical expression of Simone Weil's Statements: the transformation of men into things, objects that can therefore be killed and annihilated, and the death in life of the executioners, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes. Tragic experiences that have clearly not been enough to definitively put an end to man's violence against other men and against nature.

In conclusion

We can say that, for Kant, the end of war, a *perpetual peace* that is not the peace of cemeteries, would be a powerful sign that humanity has progressed, not only technically, but also morally. Looking at history, the answer to Kant's question: *is the human race constantly progressing for the better?* can only be negative: technological progress has made it possible to increase the quality of life and life expectancy of millions of people, but at the same time it has produced extermination camps, weapons of mass destruction and the atomic bomb. They have created an invisible bubble where each of us is obliged to be just a part of the overall system, with no chance to experience progress from an ethical point of view, and this also means creative, in the sense of being able to create unique ways of life, opposed to the dominant one-sided thinking.

The power that was in God's hands to annihilate the human species is now in our hands, and what was annihilation in God's hands, in the hands of human beings, has become the destruction of other human beings. The utopia of perpetual peace has not withstood the Hegelian "severe aftershocks of history", and force, violence and war continue to dominate the world towards catastrophe.

⁴⁶ But the same could be said of another great book, **the Bible**, which is punctuated by episodes of extreme violence, such as the fratricide of Cain against Abel and the *manu militari* conquest of the "Promised Land" or the episode of Moses coming down from Mount Sinai with the tablet of the ten commandments, including "Thou shalt not kill", and finding part of the Hebrew people worshipping the golden calf and ordering the slaughter thousands of people.

⁴⁷ WEIL, Simone. Non ricominciamo la guerra di Troia. In: *Il libro del potere*. Milano: Chiarelettere, 2022, p. 3 (translated from Italian by the author).

⁴⁸ This force, which comes down to us from the *Iliad*, is the **reactive force**, which, as Deleuze says quoting Nietzsche, separates the **active force**, the force that could make a world of peace, that can affirm its own goodness. Abah Andrade's entire philosophy is an attempt to think about this active force that has been, so to speak, left out of history as it has happened. Cf. ANDRADE, A. *The young Deleuze. The beyond-man as becoming-woman*. Micropolitical pulsations of the transcendental field. Cachoeirinhas: Editora FI, 2024.

⁴⁹ WEIL, Simone. *Non ricominciamo la guerra di Troia*, cit. p. 5.

I realised that I ended on a pessimistic note, due to advancing old age and illness, but I didn't want to leave this impression of impotence for the younger generations: we're still alive! We are fighting the righteous battle, we are resisting, we believe that a different world is possible, a world of peace, fraternity and solidarity as Kant imagined against the cynical realism of Hegel and Carl Schmitt. World War III hasn't started yet (although the Pope says it's starting in bits and pieces) and Latin America is one of the areas of the world with the fewest wars (since the Paraguayan War), although with a strong inequality and internal violence. There are signs of hope: at the G20 meeting coordinated by Brazil, there was a meeting between four Latin American countries governed by centre-left governments. Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Chile and now also Uruguay and possibly Bolivia are proposing a collaboration pact for development, peace and respect for human rights⁵⁰.

The **university** is the place where the debate of ideas should take place, it is the reason for our existence as intellectuals who elaborate and disseminate an alternative worldview. Legend (or history) tell that while the Turks were besieging Constantinople, an episode that led to its fall, the theologians and jurists of the Byzantine Empire were debating a topic of great interest to them: the sex of angels! Let's not repeat the same mistake at a time when the **citadel of the university** is under **siege** from fundamentalism, fanaticism, obscurantism, retrograde ideologies, the language of hatred that spreads lie on social networks, and the coup attempts that threaten Brazil's and Latin America's fragile democracy. Let's not stay *intramoenia*, inside the university *campus*, but let's enter the public space to debate the fundamental issues of our time, and fight the battle that is specifically ours, for cultural hegemony, as Gramsci said: the power of ideas becomes a productive force capable of transforming the world when it is taken up by the intellectual elite and the mass of the oppressed: in good and bad!

That's why we can't remain neutral but get involved so as not to let the catastrophe drag us into the abyss. Marx said in his famous *Theses on Feuerbach* that philosophers have interpreted the world, what is needed is to transform it, but this transformation won't happen without a philosophy, a theory that underpins and justifies it! Welcome to the Philosophy course that will open new horizons for you.

Long live philosophy!

⁵⁰ Not included in this pact are Venezuela, which is a dictatorship, and Argentina, which is experimenting with radical neoliberalism (anarcho-capitalism) at the expense of the Argentinian people.