

Tolerance, Peace and Democracy

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Christian Peace Ethics and Its Relevance for Tolerance and Reconciliation in Ukraine

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The goal of tolerance is to make peace possible. This does not mean the absence of differences, but the willingness to deal with them nonviolently and fairly. In his most recent encyclical *Fratelli tutti* (2020), Pope Francis primarily lays out the important role that dialogue and the awareness of fraternal togetherness play in order to make peace possible. It is mainly a peace encyclical, that has considerable implications for Ukraine as well. In Ukraine the decisive factor, however, is not the dialogue with Islam, which is particularly emphasized in the encyclical, but rather the dialogue between the different Christian denominations on the eastern borders of Europe where religious, cultural, and national differences overlap.

To the extent that religion is always a factor in the formation and ascription of identity, the churches are at the center of the conflicts. In the sense of proactive tolerance, they have an obligation to actively contribute to understanding and reconciliation and to oppose the instrumentalization of religion for social exclusion. This can only succeed if they deal self-critically with their own ambivalences and if they differentiate between what is central to their self-image and what is of secondary importance. It is important to rediscover that peace is the center of the Christian message and the point of departure for every effort in reconciliation and tolerance.

1. *The difference between ideal and reality*

According to the Christian understanding, the commitment to overcoming conflicts is a necessary consequence of believing in God. Because he, as a universal God, unites all peoples in a human family. As a merciful God, he protects the rights of the weak, the oppressed, and the stranger in a special way. Reconciliation with God enables reconciliation with human beings and vice versa. It aims at overcoming the structures of injustice, sin, and violence. According to the claim, the whole history of God with his people is a “project to overcome violence [...], the conception of the presence of God and the image of God cannot be detached from this

dynamic”¹. Peace ethics concerns the center of the Christian self-image and thus of the church. In this way, peacemaking becomes a test of the vitality of faith.

Despite the universal mandate for peace, the history of Christianity is full of violence. It is therefore controversial in research whether the monotheistic religions actually contribute to peace and non-violence. Beyond the appeals for reconciliation and peace, there is obviously also considerable potential for violence in the religions.² Monotheism, in particular, has come under suspicion: The awareness, that one's own God is the only one and one's own faith is absolutely true, has often been and is becoming the cause of violence. The absolute setting of one's own system of meaning and morals in the monotheistic religions is a constant source of conflict.³ In terms of cultural history, the tradition of ritual sacrifice may also conceal a hidden tendency to violence.⁴ However, there is also the thesis that violent myths have the function of deriving (catharsis) potential for aggression and are therefore more likely to be associated with nonviolent ethics. A scientific examination of Christian peace ethics must critically examine such questions and ambivalences.⁵

This ambivalence in the relationship to peace and violence can be observed in most religions: On the one hand, the ideal of peace plays a central role in the self-image of almost all faith communities. On the other hand, forms of confession were and are often a medium of sharp demarcation against the “unbelievers” and an “escalation factor” for violence.⁶ In view of the “new religious intolerance”⁷ that is fueling the current world conflicts, this is of high ethical and political explosiveness. In the Ukraine, the mixture of religion and nationalism in particular creates a highly explosive tension.⁸ At the same time, however, there is a growing interreligious and intercultural understanding, both in the universal Church – there in particular strengthened by the current Pope (FT) – and in Ukraine – represented here, for example, by the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Communities.

1 Freistetter/Wagnsonner 2010: 38 (translation M.V.).

2 Cf. Angenendt 2018.

3 Cf. Assmann 2003.

4 Cf. Girard 2006; Palaver 2004; Palaver 2020.

5 Cf. Altner 2003; Stipp 2017; Palaver 2020.

6 Cf. Rittberger/Hasenclever 2001.

7 Nussbaum 2013.

8 Cf. Boeckh/Turij 2015.

In all of this, the characteristic differences between the world religions and within them between different denominations, types of piety and historical epochs should not be neglected. It is precisely through the variety of different manifestations that religions, denominations and types of piety can complement and enrich one another.⁹ Gandhi's connection of the Hindu principle of non-violence (Ahimsa) and the biblical ideal of love for one's enemies became famous. From this, Gandhi developed the civil society concept of nonviolent resistance, which in the 20th century became the most important strategy for the fight against unjust systems of rule. The success of such strategies depends on the context. In general, however, a Christian ethics of peace does not mean renouncing argument, resistance, and struggle. Rather, it aims to civilize the forms in which conflicts are carried out. In order to prove itself as a force of orientation in the current antagonisms of world society, it must combine interreligious, intercultural, civil society, and social science approaches.¹⁰

2. For an enlightened religion

A lasting challenge to Christian peace ethics is the theory of the “clash of civilizations”¹¹, according to which the global conflicts of the 21st century arise essentially from the clash of cultures – and thus also of religions – for self-assertion. At first glance, it initially seems a plausible diagnosis that the conflict between the “Christian Occident” and Arab-Islamic cultures is at the center of current world conflicts. At the same time, however, there are good empirical reasons to reject this thesis: Often different religions and cultures could and can coexist peacefully for centuries. The Austro-Hungarian multiethnic state, which also led to a cultural boom in the region of today's Ukraine and ensured the peaceful coexistence of different denominations and religions, is a shining example of this. Only when the instrumentalization and ideologization of religious, national, and cultural identity constructions is added does the contrast become politically relevant and potentially explosive.¹² Religion is usually not the cause, but an escalation factor of violence.¹³ It was often and is still repeatedly abused by

9 Cf. Küng 2001; Küng/Kuschel 2001; Vogt/Thurner 2017.

10 Cf. Girard 2006; Heidenreich 2006; Heinrich 2006; Vogt 2013; 2015; 2018; 2020a; Schockenhoff 2018: esp. 578–740.

11 Huntington 2002.

12 Cf. Sen 2007.

13 Cf. Rittberger/Hasenclever 2001: 161–163 and 180–193.

political claims for power as well as generalized external attributions. Nevertheless, the religions today have to examine self-critically whether they consistently enable their followers to practice tolerance, reconciliation, peace and non-violence. In view of the political explosiveness of mixing up religion and violence, they should actively defend themselves against being believed, taught or abused as a justification of war.

There is a need for enlightened religion. Striving for peace, the religions have an obligation to stick to: “No peace between the nations without peace between the religions. No peace between religions without dialogue between religions.”¹⁴ The critical analysis of religious thought patterns that lead to the legitimation of violence is a necessary part of the defense of free democracies. This is a scientific, educational, and likewise social task.¹⁵ If religions want to be peace-building, they must not evade critical consideration of their ambivalences. A religion that is clear-minded about its own ambivalence has to develop an awareness of the “ambiguity of the world” and thus of “tolerance for ambiguity” and the appreciation of diversity.¹⁶

Enlightenment, which enables a constructive and critical handling of the differences between diverse religious claims to truth, is the best “antidote” against fundamentalist ideologies. It opposes, for example, an assertion of religions for political claims to power as well as generalized enemy images towards those who have a different belief or do not believe at all. However, enlightenment should not be equated with a secularist concept, but should also include self-critical openness to what exceeds reason and what the state cannot guarantee.¹⁷ Even if an enlightened perspective views the role of religions in peace as ambivalent, they will recognize that religion is and will remain an integral part of societies. Therefore, the religious factor remains highly relevant in order to understand and cope with the current world conflicts. This can be clearly seen in current examples.

International terrorism in particular cannot be defeated by military means alone. The same is true for the conflict in Ukraine: At its core, it is not about rational political interests (Russia, too, has probably done more harm than good to itself through its aggression, at least economically and in terms of foreign policy), but rather a religiously and nationalistically

14 Cf. Küng 1990: 102f.; cf. also Altner 2003: 81–96.

15 Cf. Heinrich 2006; Beestermöller 2007: 335–339.

16 Cf. Bauer 2018: 31–40.

17 Cf. Böckenförde 2007; Kress 2008.

charged identity conflict.¹⁸ The churches play a significant role in this.¹⁹ It is a task of scientific theology to counter the functionalization of religion for political conflicts.

According to Christian belief, tolerance in identity conflicts not at all means giving up one's own point of view. Rather, tolerance needs the ability to deal with differences. The recognition that there are lasting differences is one of their defining features.²⁰ Cultural and religious identities should therefore not be blurred, but perceived as enrichment. This places high demands on the ability to reflect as well as on the constant endeavor to educate and dialogue.²¹

3. Won wars do not mean that the peace has been won

Enlightened peace ethics begins with a sober and comprehensive analysis of the current conflicts. The first thing to do is to look at the “evolution of violence in the 20th and 21st centuries”.²² Peace and respect for human dignity are now endangered in a new way by the removal of any constraint of war²³ in the form of terrorism, hybrid wars and excesses of violence in the context of state collapse. Traditional security policy does not provide sufficient answers for this. New forms of precautionary peacekeeping, closely interwoven with political and civil society initiatives, are needed. International law, intercultural competence and human ability to reconcile are of key importance in order to win not only the war, but also peace.

In relation to Ukraine, the complex aggression that is currently emanating from Russia is a profound test of the fight for peace. This must reckon with direct and indirect attacks and destabilization strategies at all levels. But Christian peace ethics does not retreat to a position of passive defenselessness in the name of reconciliation and pacifism. It proves itself in clever measures of resistance and a sober assessment of the behavioral patterns as well as the strengths and weaknesses of all actors involved. A necessary stabilizing factor in view of the threat is the cohesion between the different groups in Ukraine – be it between the West and East Ukrainians, the

18 Cf. Golczewski 2018; Hnyp 2018; on the moral grammar of conflicts of recognition: Honneth 1992.

19 Cf. Julian 2018.

20 Cf. Forst 2017.

21 Lähnemann 2001: pp. 217–238; cf. Leimgruber 2007.

22 Cf. Münkler 2017.

23 Cf. Münkler 2002.

different ethnic groups, the churches and in dealing with the numerous internally displaced persons. It is important to preserve and promote this. That is why the corruption that destroys the functioning of the state must be combatted. This struggle demands courage. It is a central test for the struggle for inner peace and social cohesion in Ukraine. The tempting option of compensating for the weakness of social cohesion through a common external enemy image harbors an enormous danger. The diversion of aggression to the outside world is a popular pattern of populist and authoritarian politics, which is currently also endangering peace, solidarity and the opportunities for international cooperation in Europe.²⁴

In order to maintain social cohesion, a vigilant handling of the manipulation of public opinion by the (digital) media is necessary. The war is also often fought with one-sided information and images. Journalists as well as representatives of science and churches have a crucial task here to contribute to enlightenment. More human resources should be made available to expose fake-news. It would be naive to believe that the “battle for Ukraine”²⁵ is being waged solely with traditional military means. It is just naive to believe that it can be won without military protection. The new forms of hybrid and asymmetrical warfare are a challenge for the society as a whole.

It is precisely against this background that the complexity of the Christian understanding of peace turns to be highly topical: A war can be won with weapons. In order to win lasting peace, however, a cultural debate about justice, power control, and social cohesion is also required. The Christian ideal of peace is not naive and unworldly, but comprehensive. However, it can be used to distract from the necessary sober analysis of the relative conflict situations. This is why Jesus' message of peace needs to be translated into one's own time in order to be lived out credibly and politically developed as a liberating force in response to concrete threats to peace. An important translation is the respect for the unconditional dignity of all people, regardless of national, gender or religious affiliation. This idea has proven itself in modern democracies as the basis for peaceful coexistence and can ultimately be described as “the secret of peace”²⁶. The “Revolution of Dignity” on the Maidan in 2013 also made clear the measure of human dignity and the sovereignty of the people against inca-

24 Cf. Vogt 2017.

25 Cf. Justenhoven 2018.

26 Cf. John Paul II 1999; PT; FT.

pacitation by corrupt rulers for Ukraine.²⁷ In essence, it is not about the question of political alliances, but about the values of dignity, freedom and peace. These are indivisible and anchored in the core of the Christian faith. That is why I would like to put the Christian ethics of peace at the center of my further remarks.

4. Biblical Perspectives

Peace is a key biblical concept. It occurs 135 times in the Old Testament and 48 times in the New Testament.²⁸ What is specific about the biblical approach is the understanding of peace as a “work of justice” (Isa 32:17).²⁹ Programmatically, peace is thought of as justice, happiness, salvation, welfare and community, all of which can be understood as aspects of the term “shalom”. The Bible is exciting because this comprehensive focus on peace is always confronted with the human tendency to violence. Man does not live in paradise; his everyday life is shaped by the constant presence of conflict and violence. Instead of glossing over violence, the Bible asks radically about its forms and causes. “The Bible tears up the disguise of violence.”³⁰ Mercilessly it shows how the omnipresent tendency of man to violence threatens the order of creation and coexistence. Such a sober perception of the many facets of violence is the first prerequisite for dealing with it humanely.³¹

The essence of the Christian message culminates in love of one's enemies, which does not aim at defenselessness, but rather on “active love of hostility” in the sense of a strategy that seeks to win the enemy as a friend.³² Jesus' request, if someone “slaps you on the right cheek, hold the other out to him too” (Lk 6:29), does not mean a violent confrontation, but a situation of shame (namely the shameful blow with the back of the hand, otherwise we would be talking about the left and not the right cheek hit by a right handed person). Such a gesture of contempt is rejected through self-control and precisely not by engaging in a violent confrontation. The commandment to love one's enemy is the “culmination of the

27 Cf. Andruchowytsch 2014.

28 For the following cf. DBK 2000: No. 12–33.

29 Cf. Otto 1999; Biberstein 2004.

30 DBK 2000: No. 27.

31 Cf. Vogt 2012; Vogt 2020a.

32 Cf. Lapidé 1987.

ethics of Jesus”³³. It does not meet the enemy in the form of an aggressive trial of strength, but in the readiness for reconciliation, renunciation of violence and protection. The attitude of love for one's enemies, however, remains morally qualified only as long as it differs from resignation and passive, defenseless “slave morality”³⁴.

Freud also attaches his criticism of Christian morality to love of enemies by interpreting the commandment as an inhibition of aggression by the super-ego that completely contradicts the original nature of man. It inevitably leads to a less inhibited discharge of aggression towards outsiders.³⁵ Enemy love aims at disenfranchisement and arises from its own kind of courageous strength. The ethos of non-violence, which grows from the depths of Christian faith, means “an active-walking force that attacks and overcomes human evil at its roots”³⁶. A condition for the compatibility of combative and non-violent attitudes is the willingness not to evade injustice at the expense of others, to show solidarity not with those in power but with those who suffer. From a biblical point of view, love and mercy go together. The reconciling power of God's mercy becomes life force when people allow themselves to be infected by it and enable them to use it as the measure of their actions.³⁷

Mercy is not passive, but aims to actively restore justice. Even if the combative impulse of the Christian principle of love – at least in the biblical texts – remains pre-political, it is still a starting point “of the events and processes on whose breeding ground the real political changes in the situation arise”³⁸. The peaceful revolution in the Eastern European countries, which led to the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, cannot be understood without this pre-political, but by no means apolitical, participation of Christians.

5. On the history of the Christian ethics of peace in the papal magisterium

After it had been considered incompatible in the early church to be both Christian and soldier, from the 4th century onwards the church was ready to assume the role of the state religion and to compromise. Their peace

33 Gnilka 1986: 187.

34 Nietzsche 1968: 295–297.

35 Cf. Freud 1974: 191–270, esp. 239f. and 265.

36 Korff 1985: 186.

37 Cf. Kasper 2016.

38 Havel 1990: 39.

ethics have been reduced in part to criteria under which waging a war is fair. Since there is no room here to trace the various developments in Christian peace ethics in detail, reference is only made to the three peace encyclicals *Pacem Dei munus* (1920) and *Pacem in terris* (1963) and *Fratelli tutti* (2020).

After the disastrous experiences of the First World War, whose end was perceived by many not only as a defeat, but also as an insult and loss of their identity, the Apostolic Circular of 1920 exhorts the victorious and the vanquished to reconcile. This is a prerequisite for lasting peace and must be permanently secured by a League of Nations. The focus of the 1963 circular is the recognition of universally valid and indivisible human rights as the basis of peace. *Pacem in Terris* advocates overcoming the institution of war: "That is why it [...] is contrary to common sense to regard war as the appropriate means of restoring violated rights."³⁹ This approach is taken up and deepened again in the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on the "Church in today's world".⁴⁰ According to *Gaudium et Spes*, the use of military measures can only be justified if it is assigned to the goal of creating a peace order for all peoples involved on the basis of a generally recognized and binding international law and respect for human rights.⁴¹

Fratelli tutti is the third peace encyclical of the Catholic Church. Pope Francis understands cross-border fraternity as a prerequisite for peace in a world characterized by "aggressive isolation".⁴² What urges the Pope to speak out today is his diagnosis that peace, cohesion and democracy are acutely threatened in the contemporary world. According to the Pope's dramatic diagnosis, the situations of violence "have so multiplied in numerous regions of the world that they have taken on the features of what could be called a 'third world war in stages'".⁴³ Peace in no way excludes differences in perspectives, interests, and habits, but rather presupposes the protection of the respective peculiarities as well as the ability to confront.⁴⁴ For Francis, peace is based on the "mere fact of possessing an inalienable human dignity"⁴⁵ and a "culture of tolerance"⁴⁶. Francis understands peace as a process that presupposes an incessant endeavor for dialogue, under-

39 PT 67.

40 GS 77–90.

41 GS 79–84.

42 FT 9f.

43 FT 25; see also: FT 259.

44 Cf. FT 100.

45 FT 127; cf. also FT 233.

46 FT 192.

standing, and encounter, which he describes as “manual labor”⁴⁷. It is “patient work in the search for truth and justice, which honors the memory of the victims and gradually opens a common hope that is stronger than vengeance”⁴⁸.

Pope Francis speaks out radically in favor of an outlawing of the institution of war: “Therefore we can no longer regard war as a solution, for the risks will probably always outweigh the hypothetical benefits that have been ascribed to it.”⁴⁹ “The whole point is that with the development of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and the tremendous growth of new technologies, war has achieved an out-of-control destructive power affecting many innocent civilians.”⁵⁰ According to Francis, the end of the Cold War was not used sufficiently to create lasting peace because there was a lack of awareness of the common fate in the interdependent world of late modernity.⁵¹

Francis focuses on the relationship between religion and violence in a differentiated way:⁵² “Sometimes, in some groups of whatever religion, fundamentalist violence is unleashed by the imprudence of their leaders.”⁵³ But the commandment of peace is deeply inscribed in religious traditions, he said. The sincere and humble worship of God is not compatible with discrimination, hatred, and violence, but aims at respect for the inviolability of life, respect for the dignity and freedom of others, comprehensive reconciliation and loving commitment for the good of all.⁵⁴

6. *Christian commitment to peace in practice*

The actual meaning of Christian commitment cannot be sufficiently deduced from the theoretical writings on peace theology, but can only be understood in the context of peace movements. The peace movements supported by the faithful have given impulses for historically significant reconciliation processes – e. g. for the peaceful turnaround in Central-East-

47 FT 217 and FT 228–235.

48 FT 226.

49 FT 258.

50 FT 258.

51 Cf. FT 260.

52 Cf. FT 281–285.

53 FT 284.

54 Cf. FT 283.

ern Europe in 1989, for which there is no historical precedent and which can be described as the “miracle of history”.⁵⁵

In the 20th century, there was a broad Christian peace movement that was largely supported by women. The Peace League of German Catholics was founded after the end of the First World War in 1919 and immediately after the horrors of the Second World War in 1945, the international Catholic Pax Christi movement and in 1958 the interreligious peace movement “World Conference on Religion and Peace” (WCRP) educated. Characteristic elements of this multi-layered peace movement are:⁵⁶

1. Resistance to military nationalism and limitation of nation-state armaments policy;
2. Promotion of international understanding and alternatives to military-based security policy by civil society;
3. Demands for an expansion of peacekeeping under international law and international criminal jurisdiction;
4. Concepts for nonviolent resistance, civil disobedience and social defense against structural violence;
5. Organization of social peace services to promote social justice, intercultural reconciliation and to break down images of the enemy.

The initiatives undertaken by the Community of Sant'Egidio to end armed conflicts have found worldwide recognition. Time and again, they have been and are present at focal points of apparently hopeless conflicts in Africa, Kosovo or the Middle East and do a valuable service of mediation and confidence building. The impulses for regular meetings of high-ranking religious representatives are of particular importance.

Countless dissidents in the former Eastern Bloc countries have given their non-violent resistance to the totalitarian regimes a testimony to their belief in freedom, human dignity and peace. Many have paid with their lives. According to the Christian view, their sacrifice was not in vain, but became the nucleus of hope for freedom, justice and peace.

7. Humanitarian intervention and “Responsibility to protect”

Time and again, the Popes' annual messages of peace have dealt with the tasks and limits of securing peace in the face of “ethnic cleansing”, such as

55 Cf. Biser 2003.

56 Cf. Donat 1983.

in the former Yugoslavia, and genocide, such as in Rwanda. In his message of peace for the year 2000, for example, John Paul II begins with the ambitious principle of the human family. "There will be peace to the extent that all of humanity succeeds in rediscovering its original vocation, to be a single family in which the dignity and rights of persons of every class, race and religion as prior and priority over all differences and types."⁵⁷ This requires a "complete reversal of the point of view in which concepts and practices that regard the nation or state as absolute and therefore all others subordinate values, be overcome"⁵⁸. Crimes against humanity, therefore, cannot be viewed as internal affairs of a nation.⁵⁹ The Pope justifies humanitarian intervention with the "principle of non-indifference", which assigns a new and important role to the service of the soldier, precisely in a gospel-inspired view.

The postulate of humanitarian intervention, in order to protect the population from violent states and non-state actors, to provide refugees with a minimum level of security and to disarm aggressors, leads to a persistent peace ethic debate with regard to the danger of creating a very broad legitimization framework for wars (Hoppe 2004). The humanitarian interventions in Bosnia-Herzegovina on behalf of the UN Security Council were found to be correct and necessary in numerous church statements⁶⁰, while the statements on the military intervention in Kosovo were much more restrained. Above all, criticism was expressed that the lack of a UN mandate could undermine the UN's monopoly on force⁶¹ and that the non-military means of understanding had not been adequately exhausted. Doubts were also expressed as to whether the action was necessary, productive, and appropriate in terms of its means. Humanitarian intervention needs a procedure that makes it impossible for individual states to block joint action on the basis of particular interests or, conversely, to pursue their own interests under the pretext of humanitarian goals.⁶²

An important further development of the concept of humanitarian intervention is that of the responsibility to protect (often abbreviated as R2P). This begins with a redefinition of the principle of sovereignty, which is understood as the responsibility of the state to guarantee the well-being of the citizens subordinate to it by virtue of its personal or

57 John Paul II 1999: No. 5.

58 Ibid.: No. 6.

59 Ibid.: No. 7.

60 Cf. Freistetters/Wagnsonner 2010: 45–47.

61 DBK 2000: No. 154.

62 DBK 2000: No. 154; cf. Beestermöller 2003; Bohn/Bohrmann/Küenzlen 2011.

territorial sovereignty.⁶³ In fulfilling this responsibility, he is supported by the international community, which has a subsidiary responsibility to protect. However, if the political leadership of a state is unable or unwilling to protect its citizens from serious human rights violations, the international community of states may and must intervene to protect the threatened population. In accordance with the United Nations Charter, it has civilian and military resources at its disposal for this purpose, the use of which is decided by the Security Council. Compared to the concept of humanitarian intervention, the R2P expands the scope of action, that the international community commands, to react and intervene in serious human rights violations. If a state does not fulfill its sovereign obligations, it will lose the right to remain spared from foreign interference.

Genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing are identified as serious violations of human rights, which the subsidiary responsibility to protect can help to prevent. The responsibility to protect was largely developed by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in 2000/2001 and officially recognized by the United Nations in 2005. According to the ICISS draft, the R2P is divided into three partial responsibilities: the Responsibility to Prevent, the Responsibility to React and the Responsibility to Rebuild.⁶⁴ The classic criteria of the Just War (*bellum iustum*) apply as a prerequisite for the legitimate use of military means:

1. Legitimate authority: A legitimate authority is required that allows humanitarian intervention (mostly the United Nations Security Council).
2. Right intention: The intervening states must primarily have the motive to prevent and stop human rights violations.
3. Last resort: A military humanitarian intervention must be the last resort.
4. Proportional means: The proportionality of the means that is made use of must be considered.
5. Reasonable prospects: There must be a realistic prospect of success for the mission.

63 Cf. Verlage 2009.

64 International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty 2001.

8. *Paths and priorities of peacekeeping in relation to Ukraine*

Instead of a summary, twelve priorities for securing peace from a Christian perspective are to be named and applied to the current situation in Ukraine. The criteria outlined here are taken as a basis, with a church official criteriology⁶⁵, a positioning of the Vienna Institute for Religion and Peace⁶⁶ as a background. Analyzes of the current “fight for Ukraine”⁶⁷ serve.

1. Non-military attempts to resolve conflicts have to be prioritized generally. War is legitimate only as the ultimate means after careful consideration and when all other options are or are likely to be unsuccessful. This requires the support of a neutral, legally legitimized agency. In response to the annexation of Crimea, economic sanctions against Russia play a key role. These do not work quickly, but they can be a considerable means of exerting pressure in the medium and long term. It is important to maintain these measures permanently and untouched by your own interests. In the entire field of diplomacy, it must be made clear that Russia is harming and isolating itself with such a behavior by which Russia is breaching international law.

2. For the current conflict in Ukraine, it is not so much the UN that has such a key role as mediator, but primarily the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Under the chairmanship of the Swiss Heide Taghialini, the trilateral contact group (Ukraine, Russia, OSCE) was established as a discussion forum, which had been made possible by the Minsk Agreements, among other things.⁶⁸ The German Chancellor was also heavily involved in the talks. Increasing diplomatic pressure to comply with this agreement has priority and is the benchmark for all further action.

3. Conditions and limits for the recognition of a war as just are: Order by an authority legitimized under international law; defense against or correction of an injustice that is contrary to international law; right attitude / goal setting in alignment to just peace and reconciliation; limiting violence to the minimum necessary; clear time limit and chances of success of the measures. The annexation of Crimea by Russia is a violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine and therefore a grave injustice. It violates

65 CCC 2307–2330.

66 Freistetter/Wagnsonner 2010: 43.

67 Justenhoven 2018.

68 Zeller 2018: 164–172.

the Budapest Memorandum (1994), under which Ukraine was expressly assured of this integrity in return for voluntarily renouncing nuclear weapons. Ukraine has the right to self-defense.⁶⁹

4. The annexation of Crimea and the military influence in Donbass by Russia violate current international law. Ukraine is entitled to international aid.⁷⁰ However, it is not a classic symmetrical war between states, since elements of an internal conflict (albeit one that has been fueled from outside) are virulent. There are good reasons to be cautious about the “low-intensity war”⁷¹ with the proclamation of martial law and an international expansion of the military conflict. Not the refusal of solidarity in military support, but the struggle to find a balance between the necessary readiness for defense and the avoidance of an uncontrollable international expansion of the conflict in Ukraine must be the yardstick of international action.

5. In the waging of inevitable military conflicts, the rules of international law and the monopoly of the United Nations and the actors legitimized by them must be strictly recognized. The authority of the United Nations and the UN Security Council must not be bypassed, even if it is in urgent need of reform. At the same time as military actions, all means of international diplomacy must be exhausted. The goals of de-escalation must not be forgotten. The sober assessment that it is not likely that the annexation of Crimea can be reversed in the short term should not be suppressed. Ukraine needs a stable balance of power and resistance to a war of attrition. This should also be kept in mind in all international support measures.

6. Since avoiding an international expansion of the conflict has high priority, indirect support should be preferred to direct intervention. Help with military training, arms deliveries and support for various forms of civil society resistance are useful. The focus of German engagement in international responsibility has traditionally been in the non-military area. There are many opportunities for solidarity for Ukraine in the current conflict, including from the German side, which have not yet been adequately exploited. These should also be strengthened in our own interest and in defense of the European peace project. Passive tolerance in the sense of appeasing Russia, which lacks the courage to clearly identify injustice as such, does not help. The basic ethical axioms of international law are not

69 Cf. UN Charter: Art. 51.

70 Ibid. Art. 39ff.

71 Münkler 2005.

negotiable. This applies to everyone who breaks international law; that was the case, for example, in the Iraq war.⁷²

7. Armed resistance only makes sense as part of a comprehensive diplomatic and civil society resistance to aggression. What is particularly important here is a commitment against the manipulation of public opinion. Since Russia is hoping for approval, especially from the Russian-speaking population, the country is also very active here in Ukraine. This needs a counterbalance through more human, structural, and financial resources for professional journalism. Scientifically based analyzes as well as international reports are a necessary element of raising awareness against fake news. Last but not least, increased measures for broad-based political education and solid information transfer are indispensable.

8. If the human rights of a population group are massively violated over a prolonged period, the international community has a duty to engage in humanitarian intervention. The rules of ethically legitimate use of force must be observed. In particular, through the experience of the genocides in Rwanda and the Balkans, the paradigm of humanitarian intervention against pacifist ideals has prevailed in both the political and church ethics of peace.⁷³ More recently, this has been further developed under the ethical guiding principle of “responsibility to protect”. The duty of humanitarian intervention is strictly limited to genocide and serious crimes against humanity. If these criteria are interpreted strictly, they are not yet directly applicable to the situation in Ukraine. However, vigilant international observation and preparation are required in order to be able to intervene early and preventively, if necessary.

9. Since the Ukraine conflict is part of a multi-layered struggle for a new world order,⁷⁴ it cannot be resolved in the long term without the creation of an international legal and peace order with a universal security policy perspective. This is a political priority in the early 21st century. The reform of the World Security Council is of primary importance here, which today no longer adequately reflects the balance of power in the world and is abused by the powerful, especially through their right of veto, as an instrument of unilateral dominance politics. The renationalization of American politics has created a vacuum that has to be compensated for by intensifying the diverse supranational interdependencies.⁷⁵ It is current-

72 Cf. Beestermöller 2003.

73 Cf. Hinsch 2006; Schockenhoff 2018: 673–695.

74 Cf. Münkler 2017: 264–300.

75 Schockenhoff 2018: 639–665.

ly being discussed whether a European Security Council would also be needed to increase the EU's ability to act. The various institutions that are involved in security policy (including UN, NATO, OSCE, EU) must be coordinated in a complementary manner.

10. All measures must be oriented towards the goal of just peace⁷⁶, i.e. also consider social, economic, and political aspects and integrate them strategically. The restoration and safeguarding of the rule of law in Ukraine against the rampant corruption and self-enrichment of a few oligarchs at the expense of the people is a contribution to peace and social cohesion that should not be underestimated. Social peace in Ukraine is currently also massively threatened from within. Here, too, there is a risk that outwardly directed aggression is intended to divert attention from internal conflicts. That is why the classical church doctrine that justice and peace cannot be separated is highly topical. Resistance to the expropriation of popular sovereignty through corruption requires independent, critical media as well as moral education and the promotion of legal awareness. The churches and religious communities can make a significant contribution to this. It is about empowerment and education for democracy as a pillar of just peace.

11. Lasting peace needs forgiveness and reconciliation. These cannot simply be achieved through amnesty for war criminals, but require interpersonal encounters and the "healing of memories". Often the experience of injustice, hurt, and violence is the cause of new violence. Reconciliation is the root of peace. Here the churches and religious communities have an original task, since reconciliation always also has a religious dimension. At the same time, however, it is also highly relevant socially and politically. In the Ukraine it is ultimately about reconciliation between the different values, cultural mentalities, and social guiding principles within the borders of Europe. Reconciliation is to be distinguished from harmony and can be interpreted as a reconciled difference in the claim of tolerance. It does not mean resigning subordination to a repressive power, but presupposes sovereignty and active tolerance. Since the social principles are often understood as the systematic core of Catholic social doctrine and ethics, but the central theme of peace has not yet occurred at this level, I propose that reconciliation should be included in the series of social principles of the Catholic Church.⁷⁷

76 Cf. DBK 2000.

77 Cf. Vogt 2020b; to the concept of reconciliation as the core of the ethics of peace cf. PDMP.

12. In the future, peace strategies must provide more professional resources for intercultural conflict prevention and follow-up care. For the Ukraine, the scientific analysis of the very different identity constructions and the role that religions play in this are of central importance.⁷⁸ The theological criticism of a nationalist claim to the Christian faith is an important peace service that the churches have to perform. This also includes developing a well-founded concept of tolerance in the relationship between religions, ethnic groups, and cultures. The All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Communities is an important actor here. The traditional religious plurality in Ukraine has strong potential for a policy of peace, which, however, must always be re-activated through places of understanding.⁷⁹

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78 Cf. Golczewski 2018; Hnyp 2018.

79 Cf. Rap 2015; Boeckh/Turij 2015.

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