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# Russian Philosophy on the Problem of War and Peace and Intercultural Dialogue

## *Filosofía rusa sobre el problema de la guerra y la paz y el diálogo intercultural*

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### Abstract

This article analyzes the contribution of Russian philosophy to the humanistic tradition of promoting dialogical relations and peace. It highlights the peaceful meaning of Leo Tolstoy's ethics of nonviolence, Vladimir Solovyov's concept of *omniunity*, and Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogical philosophy. Dialogue is conceived not only as communication but also as a metaphysics of personality and meaning and as dialogical relationships at the intersubjective, social, and intercultural levels. These ideas were developed in contemporary intercultural philosophy both in Russia and Latin America. The article also analyzes the obstacles to dialogical and peaceful relations, aggravated by hegemonic geopolitics. The rise of global consciousness and anti-war movements led to the end of the Cold War in 1990 and created opportunities for a positive transformation of societies and the international system. But these opportunities were torpedoed by the neoconservative "revolution" and the U.S. policy of global hegemony in a unipolar world, triggering a new Cold War and the arms race, which threaten the future of humanity. This policy resulted in NATO's hybrid proxy war in Ukraine, which sought to inflict a "strategic defeat" on Russia. But countries that do not want to be dominated are striving for an alternative, multipolar world of independent sovereign states, based on relations of dialogue between equals and collaboration to solve social and global problems and peace. This alternative takes shape in BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and other associations, based on sovereign equality, a balance of interests, and consensus. The article thus highlights the role of intercultural philosophy in promoting cultural diversity and dialogical relations and in developing a vision of a free, just, and peaceful world order in the future.

**Keywords:** peace, philosophy, dialogue, multipolarity, hegemony, war, Tolstoy, Solovyov, Bakhtin, interculturality.

### Resumen

Este artículo analiza la contribución de la filosofía rusa a la tradición humanística de promover las relaciones dialógicas y la paz. Destaca el sentido pacífico de la ética de la no violencia de León Tolstói, el concepto de omniunidad de Vladímir Soloviov y la filosofía dialógica de Mijaíl Bajtín. El diálogo se concibe no solo como comunicación, sino como una metafísica de la personalidad y el significado y como relaciones dialógicas a nivel intersubjetivo, social e intercultural. Estas ideas se desarrollaron en la filosofía intercultural contemporánea, tanto en Rusia como en América Latina. El artículo, además, analiza los obstáculos que dificultan las relaciones dialógicas y pacíficas, agravados por la geopolítica hegemónica. El auge de la conciencia global y de los movimientos antibelicistas condujo al final de la Guerra Fría, en 1990, y creó oportunidades para una transformación positiva de

las sociedades y del sistema internacional. Pero estas posibilidades fueron torpedeadas por la “revolución” neoconservadora y la política estadounidense de hegemonía global en un mundo unipolar, desencadenando una nueva Guerra Fría y la carrera armamentística, que amenazan el futuro de la humanidad. Esta política dio lugar a la guerra híbrida por delegación de la OTAN en Ucrania, que pretendía infligir una “derrota estratégica” a Rusia. Pero los países que no quieren ser dominados están luchando por un mundo alternativo, multipolar, de Estados soberanos independientes, basado en relaciones de diálogo entre iguales y en la colaboración para resolver los problemas sociales y globales y la paz. Esta alternativa toma forma en los BRICS, la Organización de Cooperación de Shanghái y otras asociaciones basadas en la igualdad soberana, el equilibrio de intereses y el consenso. El artículo destaca así el papel de la filosofía intercultural en la promoción de la diversidad cultural y las relaciones dialógicas y en la elaboración de una visión de un orden mundial libre, justo y pacífico en el futuro.

**Palabras clave:** paz, filosofía, diálogo, multipolaridad, hegemonía, guerra, Tolstói, Soloviov, Bajtín, interculturalidad.

## Introduction

The theme of this journal issue, “The Contemporary World as a Challenge for Philosophy or Intercultural Thought Today”, is challenging due to its complexity. There is also an asymmetry of power: Philosophy expresses an intellectual power of human spirit and reason versus the “heavy metal” of reality, especially of political reality—the “hard power” of the military and economic might of the state and the “soft power” of deceptive propaganda preying on people’s ignorance and fearful/aggressive instincts.

Philosophy since Socrates has questioned and challenged the problematic reality of the existing world and the powers that be, which can be risky. Philosophy is characterized by openness to all questions and all possibilities and is deeply subversive of all authority that takes itself for granted and all ideological positions presented as requiring no further examination. Philosophy itself is *polemos*: “It is always at war with itself, and thus mirrors life, the world, conceived as strife”. But the strife that philosophy promotes “is a *respectful* strife, one which requires that all its practitioners be taken seriously and be regarded, however different may be their cultures and worldviews, as potential participants in an ongoing dialogue that is universal” (McBride, 2010, p. 427).

Humanity is facing manifold challenges today, whether social or global, such as climate change, environmental crisis, the underdevelopment of former colonial regions, pandemics, global health security, escalating violence, and wars. We are living in a period of profound changes, of the fading of late modernity, the decline of the hegemonic unipolarity, and the painful birth of the multipolar world, which brings its challenges but also great opportunities. This requires considerable efforts for the transformation of society and the world order, as well as our hearts and minds (*metanoia*). Such transformation needs an adequate philosophy. But, in order to measure up to this transformative task, philosophy itself needs to undergo transformation.

Among the existing philosophical currents, intercultural philosophy stands out. In its liberational version, the roots of which can partly be found in the Latin American philosophy of liberation, intercultural philosophy was creatively advanced by Raúl Fornet Betancourt. His project of the intercultural transformation of philosophy contributed substantially to the quest for new ways of thinking and reflecting philosophically on contemporary problems, helping us better understand their root causes and possible solutions and alternatives. His project had a twofold task. First, a philosophy must critically review its way of thinking and expose the “monocultural” limitations of its concepts,



that is, “to reconfigure philosophy through the interchange and solidarity of the diverse configurations in the cultural traditions of humankind” (Fornet Betancourt, 1996, p. 13). Its second task is related to the social role of this transformed philosophy, which should be able to develop ideas and approaches helpful to confronting the challenges of our time. These challenges come mainly from the fundamental contradiction between the homogenizing tendency of hegemonic globalization and “the dialectics of the cultural resistance of the peoples who want to reaffirm their right to political, economic, and cultural self-determination” (p. 12).

This philosophy stands normatively for the recognition of both socio-cultural diversity and dialogical relationships. It asserts the fundamental role of dialogical relationships as constitutive of the human personality: “Dialogue is the primordial substance from which human beings ... develop their humanity and discern their situation in the world” (Fornet Betancourt, 2016, p. 44). The full realization of this dialogical potential is viewed as the path toward the transformation of society and human liberation. In facing a social, political, cultural, and anthropological crisis, intercultural philosophy serves as the basis for a comprehensive response by critiquing its root cause and guiding the search for alternatives.

Intercultural philosophy, headquartered in the International School for Intercultural Philosophy (EIFI) in Barcelona, analyses through its various congresses, seminars, and publications, the human, social, and global problems—from culture, spirituality, and education to the consequences of homogenizing globalization, pandemics, climate change, and war and peace. In 2023, it held a series of seminars on “Europe and Peace”, the third of which focused on “Peace in Russian thought”. In this article, I share some of the ideas from my presentation at this seminar and reflections inspired by the lively discussion that followed.

## Russian Philosophy of Peace and Nonviolence Challenging Militarism

### Leo Tolstoy: War and Peace; Toward Nonviolence

At present, the problem of war and peace is critical. The world barely survived the Cold War, and today, we are in the tense situation of a new Cold War—or perhaps even the beginning of the Third World War. In trying to understand the problem of war and peace, philosophers seek wisdom in many philosophical traditions. Immanuel Kant’s treatise *Toward Perpetual Peace* is a classic source from Western philosophy. Another source can be found in Russian thought, especially in religious philosophy, with its articulation of the theme of peace and nonviolence. Russian thought is humanistic. Its central concept is love: love for God, human beings, and nature. This tradition considers many metaphysical, anthropological, historiosophical, social, and ethical issues, including that of war and peace.

Since its conversion to Eastern Orthodox Christianity in 988, Russia has been subject to invasions and had to fight for its independence against many invaders, including the Golden Horde in the 13th century, the Poles in 1610, Napoleon in 1812, and Hitler in 1941, before the Cold War. Out of this tragic experience of wars, Russian culture was engraved with a strong devotion to peace. The existential theme of war and peace is thus a common thread of Russian thought and has been expressed by Leo Tolstoy, Vladimir Solovyov, Nikolai Berdyaev, and Mikhail Bakhtin, among others.

Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) was a combat officer and participant in the Crimean War. He knew well the tragic reality of war and, as a humanist, was very critical of war and its inhuman nature. Tolstoy's antimilitarism gained its articulated expression in his philosophical novel *War and Peace* about the Napoleonic invasion of Russia and the Patriotic War of 1812. The novel shows the contrast between a war of conquest by the French invaders and the patriotic war of people defending their lives and their Motherland. In the epilogue, Tolstoy writes: "My whole idea is that if vicious people are united and constitute a power, then honest folk must do the same" (Tolstoy, 2001, "First Epilogue, Chapter XVI", para. 33). If we apply this idea to the problem of war and peace, peace needs to be defended by the solidarity and efforts of ordinary peace-loving people.

*War and Peace's* narrative is intertwined with entire chapters of philosophical reflections on the problems of freedom and necessity, the philosophy of history, and war and peace. In his novels and philosophical essays, Tolstoy raises the problem of war and peace in its historical, political, and social aspects and offers vital analysis in its relation to human life, the meaning of life, and the question of life and death. His humanistic ideas, expressed in the artistic form of his novels, continued in his philosophical and journalistic publications as reflections on the state, power, and politics.

Since war is politically organized violence and violence begins in people's minds, Tolstoy sought to investigate its root causes and the possibilities of changing our way of thinking and acting in favor of peaceful relationships. Tolstoy justified his philosophy of peace and nonresistance to evil by force by referring to the Bible: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. But I tell you, do not resist an evil person" (*New King James Version*, 1982, Matthew 5:38–39). Jesus' words about non-violence and non-resistance to evil by force indicate the right direction, the height humanity must reach on the endless path of moral ascent.

Tolstoy explains that violence is to force a person to do what he/she does not want. It is the opposite of love, which means to do what the other wants, to subordinate one's will to the other's. In this sense, the commandment of nonresistance is a negative formula of the law of love: "Not resisting evil means not doing violence, that is, not committing an act that is always opposed to love" (Tolstoy, 1957, p. 313).

Christ's entire doctrine, according to Tolstoy, is the metaphysics and ethics of love. As the supreme and fundamental law of life, love is the only moral law. The manifestation of the law of love is nonresistance to evil by force. The renunciation of violence transfers the conflict to the sphere of the spirit, where it can only receive a constructive solution and be overcome through a common agreement. Nonresistance transforms human activity into a plan of internal moral self-perfection. The kingdom of God is within each person, and everyone must discover it within themselves and build their kingdom of God—only then can a common kingdom be formed (Tolstoy, 2006).

Nonresistance is an area of individually responsible behavior. No matter how difficult the fight against evil in oneself is, it depends only on the person himself. Nonresistance to evil, converted into the spiritual work of moral improvement, is the touchstone of man's freedom. Tolstoy is essentially saying a very simple thing: Violence is incompatible with morality and reason, and whoever wants to live according to morality and reason must never commit it.

Tolstoy condemned the world of violence, oppression, and injustice, but while this required radical transformation, he argued it must be achieved peacefully. He did not speak of nonresistance to evil in general but only of nonresistance to evil by force. Tolstoy mentions such alternative forms of resistance as spiritual influence, persuasion, discus-



sion, protest, and education. These are aimed at separating a person who commits evil from the evil itself and appealing to their conscience, to their spiritual principle, which cancels evil so that it stops being an obstacle to cooperation. Tolstoy sought radical changes to the spiritual foundations of life, turning enemies into friends. For instance, he corresponded with Mahatma Gandhi and inspired him and the global nonviolent resistance movement, successfully embodied by the anti-racist movement for equality led by Martin Luther King Jr.

Nonviolence means that no one should commit violence to begin with, nor respond to violence with violence, such that they neither start nor perpetuate the vicious circle. The nonresistance to evil by force indicates the height humanity must reach on the endless path of moral ascent. At first glance, Tolstoy's ideas of nonviolence and peace may seem merely idealistic and utopian. However, such "idealism", that is, the strong commitment to the moral normativity of nonviolent relations, is precisely what is missing in attempts to transform society into a more peaceful and humane world order.

History shows that attempts to prevent politically organized violence through political and institutional instruments, including the United Nations and international legislation, were predominantly insufficient because they did not make the essential change to people's consciousness or ways of thinking and relating to others. Such positive and vital changes in socio-political conditions must be accompanied, even anticipated, by a moral and spiritual transformation of human beings (a *metanoia*).

The idea of nonviolent relationships constitutes an absolute normative ethical ideal that guides humanity as a possible strategy to eliminate violence in all its structural and direct forms, especially wars. In short, the idea of nonviolent relationships serves as a moral criterion to evaluate the actions of people and social groups, as well as the policies of states in the international arena, and to guide people in the struggle for a just peace.

## Vladimir Solovyov and Omniunity

The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries in Russia was an exceptionally creative period called the "Silver Age" of Russian culture. During this era of religious and philosophical renaissance in Russia, in continuity with the traditions of ancient Platonism, Russian religious philosophers and theologians relied on the metaphysics of *omniunity* (*vse-edinstvo* – *всеединство*, the *all-unity*) in search of the harmony of being in the ontological sense. "The intuitions of the worldview of Orthodox Christianity ... and the ontological basis of the classical Western intellectual heritage met and united in the philosopheme of omniunity" (Horujy, 2000, p. 41). Omniunity, which means overcoming discord and aspiring for harmony and peace, was especially consonant with Russian Orthodox spirituality and convenient for expressing the ideals and values of Russian culture. The Russian mentality aspires to overcome fragmentation and separation and achieve wholeness and unity, whether in the world, society, or the human soul.

The founder of this current of thought was Vladimir Sergeyevich Solovyov (1853–1900). Solovyov's philosophy centered around the concept of omniunity, the spirit that connects the elements of nature and the spiritual worlds, that unites society with the highest Origin or Principle. The original conceptual meaning of omniunity is the unity of humanity in God, the divine humanity (*Godmanhood*, *theohumanity*, *theandria*):

The will of God is open to everyone: *That everything be one*. And this will, which has been carried out in heaven since time immemorial, must be carried out on earth through the consensual action of the human will, because God wants *free* omniunity. (Solovyov, 1989, p. 205)



The concept of omniunity in this sense goes back to the Slavophile idea of *sobornost'* (catholicity and conciliarity) as an expression of that unity in the multitude, which is the Church.

The concept of omniunity is universal: It defines ontology, sets the principles of the theory of integral knowledge, is associated with the method of criticism of abstract principles, and serves as a methodological principle that provides both a method of creating concepts and a method of unification of all sections of the philosophical system. Along with the philosophical intuition of omniunity, there is the mystical motif of *Sophia*: Solovyov was called a knight of *Sophia* (Virgin of Wisdom, Eternal Friend, Eternal Femininity). The combination of these two sources created Solovyov's philosophical system.

Omiunity means harmony and peace among people. This desire to move from the fragmented and disunited to the harmony of the united and perfect is at the core of Solovyov's philosophy. It emphasizes that omniunity is the perfect harmonic unity of the multitude, where each part carries the whole in itself. Perfect omniunity requires complete balance, equivalence, and equality between the one and the whole. This balance is one of the main factors of peace as such. Solovyov's concepts of omniunity, good, and ethics have a meaning oriented toward harmony and peace.

Of note is that in Solovyov's philosophy omniunity is a unifying principle, which by no means makes the omniunity blissful and guaranteed, but which makes its way through intense confrontation and struggle of opposing forces.

In the early 1890s, he temporarily became close to Tolstoy and accepted the idea of nonresistance to evil by force. Later, however, his views on this idea evolved and he thought that goodness alone is not enough to eliminate evil. He wrote about the possibilities of the militant and the peaceful methods of combating evil:

It is only the power of evil itself that is absolutely wrong, but not such means of fighting as the sword of the soldier or the pen of the diplomat afford. These tools must be appraised at their actual usefulness in the given circumstances, and that must be considered the better of the two whose use is more effective in upholding the cause of good. (Solovyov, 1990, p. 21)

Solovyov insists on the "fundamental denial of war" as "abnormal" and safeguards the policy of "preserving peace". However, the reality of the bellicose world intervened in Solovyov's views on society, history, and the problem of war and peace. The wars in Europe and the Far East, especially the militarist policy of Japan, worried Solovyev and influenced his views on war and peace. In his article "The Meaning of War", published in 1895, Solovyov analogizes war with humanity's chronic illness: War is primarily an external manifestation of the conflictive events occurring in individuals' inner spiritual space and relations between people and between states.

According to Solovyov, the problem of war involves three different questions: "The generally moral, the historical, and the personally moral" (Solovyov, 2010, p. lix). The answer to the first question is indisputable: Peace is good, and "war is an anomaly or an evil" (Solovyov, 2010, p. lix). Regarding the second question, historically, "war has been the direct means of the external and the indirect means of the internal unification of humanity" (Solovyov, 2010, p. 408). He characterizes war as a "relative evil"—not in the sense that it is intrinsically normal, but rather that it is necessary under given conditions, such as in self-defense against invasion. He explains this with the analogy of a house fire when it becomes not only permissible but also obligatory to throw children out of the window of a burning house onto the pavement to save them.



Concerning the third question, Solovyov argues that in the personal moral attitude toward war, which every person adopts from his/her ideas and moral experiences, each individual's initial desire will be to condemn war. However, an individual also has the duty to defend their country. Thus, between

War on the one hand and the abstract denial of it on the other lies the duty of the individual to the organized whole—the state—which, down to the end of history, conditions both the existence and the progress of humanity. (Solovyov, 2010, p. 406)

Solovyov disagrees with those who think war will become impossible if everyone rejects compulsory military service. Conversely, he argues it is not only meaningless but also unfair to one's fellow citizens since it would transfer one's duty to someone else. "The military or indeed any compulsory organization is not an evil, but a consequence and a symptom of evil" (Solovyov, 2010, p. 405).

Solovyov also disagrees with those who justify war with the argument of the struggle for existence:

Just as the struggle for existence is independent of war and carried on by methods which have nothing in common with fighting, so, on the other hand, war has grounds of its own distinct from the struggle for the means of livelihood. (Solovyov, 2010, p. 388)

He maintains that war has other causes related "not to the inevitable struggle for existence but to the free play of evil passions" and refers to the biblical story of Cain and Abel: "The fratricide with which history begins was caused by envy and not by hunger" (Solovyov, 2010, p. 389). He added, "The evil of war is in the extreme hostility and hatred between the disjecta membra of humanity" (p. 407).

In 1900, Solovyov published his last book, *War, Progress, and the End of World History: Three Conversations*, which is less optimistic about the global situation and humanity's future. In their dialogues, the protagonists mention the growing contradictions between countries, militarism, and military conflicts in the East and West (these processes emerged as the precursors of the First World War). Although the long-awaited possibility of omniunity and peace remains in the book, it is relegated to a distant future. He writes about the conclusion of the dialogues of the protagonists that

[T]hese conversations about evil and about the militant and the peaceful methods of combating it had to be concluded with a definite statement of the last, the extremist manifestation of evil in history, the picture of its short-lived triumph and its final destruction. (Solovyov, 1990, p. 21)

Solovyov emphasizes the ideas of omniunity and ecumenical Christian culture and favors uniting the three branches of Christianity into a single universal church. His Christian universalism is supranational and supranational. He considers national history through the prism of the history of the Ecumenical Church. The idea of the need for a union of independent nations is also based on the idea of the Church as "the living body of Christ" but without any nationalism. The realization of the idea of the kingdom of God is the vocation of ideal humanity and the supreme meaning of the historical process.

## Mikhail Bakhtin and the Philosophy of Dialogical Relationships

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) is a representative of the exceptionally creative period in Russian philosophy and the Russian and German philosophical debates during the rise of European humanistic thought in the early 20th century. Unfortunately, that process was interrupted in Europe by wars and revolutions. Working under harsh conditions of repression, Bakhtin continued to contribute to this line of thought and pass it on to a new generation fighting for a more humane world.



In his early philosophical work *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, written around 1920, Bakhtin (1993) opposes humanistic and dialogic philosophy to irreconcilable contradictions and uncompromising struggle with the Manichean either-or logic and a monologic mentality. In his books on Fyodor Dostoevsky's poetics (Bakhtin, 1984), he glimpsed a new literary phenomenon, the polyphonic novel, while simultaneously developing his dialogical philosophy.

Bakhtin saw a paradigmatic shift from the monologic framework to dialogical philosophy as the major event in 20th-century thought. His methodology challenged philosophical monologism, and he argued in favor of dialogical principles. To the one-dimensional monological world of stereotypes and authoritarian dicta, he opposed the pluralistic dialogical world of creative thought, recognizing others as equals, personal moral responsibility and shared coexistence, and openness toward individuals' historical-cultural creativity.

Dialogical philosophy, as elaborated by Bakhtin, offers a vision of the human being and society based on the principles of dialogue and communication at all levels: individual, intersubjective, social, and cultural. Dialogue is not simply a conversation but a series of dialogical relationships, which are "an almost universal phenomenon" and refer not only to speech but permeate "all relationships and manifestations of human life—in general, everything that has meaning and significance" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 40).

The dialogical relations between the self and the other constitute the structure of being understood as an event of co-being: "I-for-me, the other-for-me, and I-for-the-other" (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 54).

Dialogue is a phenomenon of the personal being. Since a person perceives the world only from a certain perspective, they must go beyond his/her point of view and assume an "outside" position to be in dialogue with others and, ultimately, with the Absolute Other. In this regard, Bakhtin wrote about dialogue not only as communication but as a metaphysics of personality and meaning. He describes this using the concept of *vnenakhodimost'* (being "outside" something). For creative understanding to occur, the person must be "*located outside* the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 7).

Bakhtin expanded the conception of dialogue to the realm of cultures, affirming the diversity of cultures and their mutual influence and mutual need. These ideas contributed to the dismantling of the one-dimensional "monolithic" view of culture, and to a deeper understanding of the diversity of cultures and the justification of intercultural dialogue. Bakhtin (1986) emphasized "the interconnection and interdependence of various areas of culture" and that "it is only in the eyes of *another* culture that the foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly" (p. 7).

These two aspects of culture—diversity and unity—were articulated, each in its own manner, in the works of Bakhtin and Aleksei Losev. Their ideas gained prominence in the 1970s–1980s during the new renaissance of Russian philosophy and culture. They, along with the works of Dmitry Likhachev, Sergey Averintzev, and other Russian philosophers, laid a theoretical foundation for "culturology," the discipline that investigates the diversity of cultures and their common underlying principles. Yuri Lotman, Mikhail Gasparov, and Vladimir Bibler contributed to the further development of a theory of dialogue.

The philosophical ideas of dialogue obtained their specific expressions in discourse ethics and intercultural philosophy. Dialogue is at the center of movements to transform philosophy, such as those undertaken by Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas in dis-



course ethics and, later, by Raúl Fornet Betancourt in intercultural philosophy. The ideas of dialogue were creatively assimilated by intercultural philosophy, which underlies the diversity of cultures and their dialogical relationships.

Bakhtin's dialogism is a philosophical justification of dialogical relationships between individuals and within culturally diverse societies. It can be extended to a vision of the human being and society based on the principles of dialogue and communication at all levels. This is an alternative to a conflictive world of individualism, monological authoritarianism, hegemonic globalization, and wars. The principles of dialogical philosophy can be considered a theoretical basis for a more peaceful and just world order.

Dialogical relations are indispensable for diplomacy and negotiations to solve problems fairly and peacefully. Dialogical philosophy gained impetus in the movements for the recognition of cultural diversity and as a response to the escalation of global problems, whose possible solutions require dialogue and collaboration. In the political field, the transition from the unipolar hegemonic world to a multipolar world order is also a step from a neocolonial monological dictatorship to relations of dialogue between peoples, cultures, and civilizations.

## The Century of Wars

Russian intellectuals were deeply troubled by the Cold War. They shared the concerns of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, which warned humanity about the tragic situation arising as a result of the development of weapons of mass destruction, and their call: "We appeal, as human beings, to human beings: Remember your humanity and forget the rest" (*Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, 1955, para. 16*).

Working as a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, I was among those who wrote about the dangers of a political-ideological confrontation in the Atomic Age and the need to find peaceful solutions through diplomacy and negotiations. For example, at the peak of the Cold War, prominent philosophers from the Russian Academy of Sciences published a book, to which I contributed, titled *Problems of Peace and Social Progress in Contemporary Philosophy* (Demenchonok, 1983). In it, the problems and theories of war and peace were discussed, as well as the views of Arnold J. Toynbee, Karl Jaspers, Bertrand Russell, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Mahatma Gandhi, and other thinkers from the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. The volume invoked the peace-loving traditions of philosophical thought in both the West and East. The contributors argued that humanity's survival is supreme in comparison to the narrow interests of particular social classes, geopolitical ambitions, or ideologies. They also justified the possibility and, indeed, the necessity of the peaceful coexistence and collaboration of nations to avert the risk of nuclear catastrophe and solve the global problems of the arms race, underdevelopment, and the environmental crisis. This and similar publications built up an international dialogue in search of peace and the survival of humanity. The humanistic imperative of peace obtained its political shape in Russia in the "new political thinking", which asserts the priority of universal values, collaboration, and mutual security based on political-diplomatic rather than military means.

In the final decades of the 20th century, Tolstoy's concept of nonviolence attracted renewed attention and was further developed in Russia. For instance, Abdusalam A. Guseynov introduced the notion of the "ethics of nonviolence" and wrote about the revival of Tolstoy's idea of nonviolence in its relation to politics:

The idea of non-violence entered (returned, if we refer to L. N. Tolstoy) in the circle of research topics of Russian philosophy at the end of the 1980s on the wave of ... universal solidarity

and participation in the struggle for the democratization of public life. At that time, this idea had a positive echo in public opinion. (Guseynov, 2012, p. 518)

This whole philosophy of peace grew from the Russian humanistic tradition nurtured by Orthodox values, Tolstoy's ethics of nonviolence, Solovyov's philosophy of *omniunity*, and Bakhtin's dialogism, as well as from the Russian cultural code. It was also based on the uniquely deep wisdom gained through the Russian people's unprecedented suffering during the Second World War, sacrificing 27 million lives to liberate their homeland and, with the Allies, to liberate Europe from the plague of Nazi-fascism. This philosophy was subsequently taken up by peace movements around the world, and the rise of this global consciousness, with its movements for peace, democratization, and diplomacy, contributed to the end of the Cold War.

The people of the Soviet Union were genuinely interested in peace and implemented this philosophy in praxis. Russia subsequently pulled out of the arms race and ended the Cold War, a move that was seen as saving the world from a potential nuclear apocalypse. The basic premise of ending the Cold War was peaceful coexistence, the reduction and eventual destruction of nuclear weapons, and steps toward disarmament. Russia followed this path with multiple unilateral steps, including agreeing to tear down the Berlin Wall and to the reunification of Germany, dissolving the Warsaw Pact in 1991, and drastically reducing its arsenal.

The end of the Cold War created opportunities for a positive transformation of societies and international relations. One might even say that it could be considered as the third attempt to implement the Kantian project of perpetual peace. It inspired movements for democratization and human rights protection and the activation of the UN, generating great hopes for the future.

## **Hegemonic Unipolarity as a Challenge to Socio-Cultural Diversity and Peace**

On the eve of the 21st century, many hoped for positive changes and a new era of peace and socio-economic development. Unfortunately, the economic and political forces interested in the preservation of the status quo and the vested interests of big corporations, the military-industrial-political complex, and the "deep state", epitomized in the neoconservative "revolution", torpedoed these transformative opportunities and shifted world politics toward the extreme right, militarism, and neocolonial hegemony in diametric opposition to the prospects of lasting peace once envisioned by Kant.

Russians believe that their peaceful initiatives were not reciprocated. In a breach of its promises and written agreements, the U.S. withdrew from arms control treaties, modernized its nuclear arsenal, and expanded NATO eastward, close to the Russian borders, converting Eastern European countries and some of the former Soviet Republics into militarized "anti-Russian" outposts. The crux of the matter is that the peaceful end of the Cold War was based on a great deal of trust, and the blatant trampling of this trust undermined the very basis for diplomacy and international law. Peace, trust, and international law fell prey to this cynicism. This formed the prelude to a new Cold War.

Global domination by a superpower is perceived as a threat by nations that do not want to be dominated, provoking defensive reactions and galvanizing the arms race. The U.S. undermined the concept of deterrence because its nuclear buildup disturbed the strategic balance. It developed the Ballistic Missile Defense System, which makes it possible for the U.S. to launch a first strike while simultaneously hoping to shield itself from a retaliatory response. To counter it, Russia developed hypersonic missiles immune



to any current missile defense system. Neither “Star Wars” nor a layered missile defense system can shield the U.S. from retaliation in the event of a first strike; instead, it has increased the risk that it might become the target for a retaliatory strike. China is also boosting its nuclear potential. Technical mistakes in highly complex automated systems might trigger an unintended launch. All this increases the already high risk of a nuclear catastrophe for the world.

This was also the context of the aggravation of the Ukrainian crisis, which began with the Western-sponsored coup *d'état* by ultranationalist and neo-Nazi forces in February 2014 and the civil war in Donbas. Steven Cohen describes this coup:

In February 2014, the radicalized Maidan protests, strongly influenced by extreme nationalist and even semi-fascist street forces, turned violent. [...] Yanukovich fled to Russia. Minority parliamentary parties representing Maidan and, predominantly, western Ukraine—among them Svoboda, an ultranationalist movement previously anathematized by the European Parliament as incompatible with European values—formed a new government. Washington and Brussels endorsed the coup and have supported the outcome ever since. Everything that followed, from Russia's annexation of Crimea and the spread of rebellion in southeastern Ukraine to the civil war and Kiev's “anti-terrorist operation”, was triggered by the February coup. (Cohen, 2022, p. 18)

The people of Donbas, the eastern region of Ukraine with a majority Russian population, rejected the coup in Kyiv and the ultranationalist regime and demanded autonomy. But the Kyiv regime responded with military force and sparked a civil war, attacking Donbas with bombers, tanks, and artillery for eight years, resulting in more than 14 000 victims.

Russia sought to resolve the civil war between the people of Donbas and the Kyiv regime by peaceful political-diplomatic means, and together with Germany and France, it supported the Minsk agreements, according to which the Ukrainian authorities should have undertaken constitutional reforms to grant autonomy to the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, accepting “the law on their special status” that would ensure self-government and elections in the provinces of Donbas. These agreements were signed and endorsed by the UN Security Council, but Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky refused to implement them. Angela Merkel, who mediated the agreements, acknowledged that the Minsk agreements were signed with the sole objective of giving Ukraine time to rearm and strengthen itself (Brown, 2022). Russia characterized this statement as disappointing and deceptive.

The crisis in Ukraine was aggravated by its foreign policy aim to join NATO, viewed by Russia as a security threat, and by NATO's proxy hybrid war in Ukraine, which sought to inflict a “strategic defeat” on Russia. Russia tried to settle the conflict diplomatically by convincing the U.S. to abandon the idea of bringing Ukraine into NATO.

But Washington refused and instead doubled down at every turn—arming and training Ukraine's military and including it in NATO military exercises. Fearing that Ukraine was fast becoming a de facto NATO member, Russia sent letters on 17 December 2021 to President Biden and NATO itself demanding a written commitment that Ukraine would not join the alliance and instead be a neutral state. Secretary of State Antony Blinken tersely replied on 26 January 2022, “There is no change; there will be no change.” [...] From a realist standpoint, Moscow's reaction to NATO expansion into Ukraine is a straightforward case of balancing against a dangerous threat. (Mearsheimer, 2023, “The Ukraine Conflict”, paras. 1–2)

The escalation of the crisis prompted the Russian leadership to recognize the independence of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic. On February 24, 2022, it launched a “special military operation”, claiming it was neces-

sary to “demilitarize and de-nazify” Ukraine. In this context, “demilitarize” meant not allowing NATO’s presence and ensuring Ukraine’s neutral status, and “denazify” meant defending the Russian and Russian-speaking population from discrimination and Nazi attacks. Russia insists that the “special military operation” was not the start of the war but an attempt to end it.

After the start of the “special military operation”, Russia held a series of negotiations with Ukraine, and on March 29, 2022, the Ukrainian delegation initialed and signed an agreement in Istanbul to resolve the conflict peacefully, which provided for Ukraine’s obligation not to join NATO and maintain a neutral, non-nuclear status. But Zelensky rejected this agreement and said he would seek a military victory on the battlefield.

“Ukraine conflict could have ended in Spring 2022”, David Arakhamia, the head of the Ukrainian delegation at the peace talks with Russians in Istanbul, said in an interview. He confirmed that “It was always about NATO... They were prepared to end the war if we agreed to... neutrality, and committed that we would not join NATO... But when we returned from Istanbul, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson came to Kyiv and said that we would not sign anything with them at all, and let’s just fight” (Koroshiya, 2023, min. 1:12–2:23). The Kyiv-based newspaper *Ukrayinska Pravda* reported that Russia “could defeat Ukraine in 72 hours. The only choice for Ukraine was to surrender” (Romanyuk, 2022, para. 9). When Russia offered negotiations, Zelensky sent a delegation with the goal of creating the impression he was willing to make a deal. But the unexpected visit of Boris Johnson on April 9th, 2022 was key in persuading Kyiv to break off peace negotiations with Moscow and thus in preventing an end to fighting. His message was that “even if Ukraine was ready to sign some kind of agreement with Russia, the West was not” (Romanyuk, 2022, para. 44). The West pledged to help Ukraine with all sorts of heavy weapons, and Kyiv officials publicly planned for a “total defeat” of Russia.

According to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov,

After Istanbul, in response to a glint of realism in the Ukrainian approach, the Russian armed forces de-escalated operations on the Kiev-Chernigov track as a gesture of goodwill and to expedite the progress towards an agreement. What we got in response was a provocation in Bucha, with the West immediately taking advantage of it to announce a new portion of sanctions, as well as Ukrainian neo-Nazis committing atrocities against Russian prisoners of war... We view this as a manifestation of the Kiev regime being controlled by Washington and its allies, who are pushing President Vladimir Zelensky to continue hostilities. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2022, paras. 4–5)

Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, in an interview published by Germany’s *Berliner Zeitung* newspaper on October 20, 2023, said that he was asked by Kyiv to help mediate the March 2022 peace negotiations between Ukrainian and Russian officials in Istanbul:

The only people who could resolve the war over Ukraine are the Americans. During the peace negotiations in March 2022 in Istanbul with Rustem Umierov, the Ukrainians did not agree to peace because they were not allowed to. They first had to ask the Americans about everything they discussed [...] Umierow said that Ukraine does not want NATO membership. He also said that Ukraine wants to reintroduce the Russian language in Donbas. But in the end, nothing happened. My impression: Nothing could happen because everything else was decided in Washington. That was fatal. (Schröder, 2023, para. 23)

Zelensky asked NATO to give him more weapons for the war against Russia, then signed a decree in September 2022 that prohibited and criminalized negotiating with Russia, blocking a diplomatic solution to the conflict. In just one year of the war in Ukraine, “U.S. and European officials have estimated that as many as 120 000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed or wounded” (Khurshudyan *et al.*, 2023, para. 2).





## International Law and Peace

The new Cold War and its Ukrainian front is accompanied by an information war. Each side is pushing its narrative, involving arguments related to international law and agreements. It is worth examining some of them.

Western politicians argue that a sovereign country has the right to be a member of NATO. However, Russia objects to this and invokes the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that it signed with the European Union in 1994, stating that in the globally interrelated world, security is indivisible, meaning that each participating state has the same right to security and that they will not strengthen their security at the expense of that of other states. The extension of NATO and its military infrastructure to the Russian borders violated this principle of indivisibility of security.

To Western politicians' argument that the "special military operation" violated the territorial integrity of Ukraine, Russia responds that it was forced to do so to help the Russian-speaking people of Donbas in their struggle for self-determination. In the UN Charter, there is a certain tension between the principle of the self-determination of peoples and the principle of territorial integrity. After UN members long argued which supersedes the other, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States following the Charter of the United Nations was adopted on October 24, 1970. After it expounds on the self-determination of peoples, it denounces any action that would dismember

The territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples as described above and thus possessed of a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or color. (UN General Assembly, 1970, p. 124)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, speaking via videoconference at a session of the UN Human Rights Council, called on this principle when he said:

"Regarding the ongoing campaign of an alleged violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, the initiators of which show complete indifference and contempt for the violation of human rights, I would like to draw attention to the 1970 Declaration of Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation between States in accordance with the Charter UN" [...]. He emphasized that this document, approved by a consensus resolution of the UN General Assembly, stipulates that the principle of respect for territorial integrity applies to "states that observe in their actions the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples (...) and, as a result, have governments representing without differences of race, creed or color of the entire people living in a given territory". ("Lavrov nazval", 2022, paras. 3–4)

Therefore, Lavrov argues that the principle of respect for territorial integrity applies only to states whose governments represent all people living on their territory, which is not the case in Ukraine: "The Kyiv neo-Nazi government obviously was not and is not such in relation to the peoples of Ukraine" ("Lavrov nazval", 2022, para 5). Lavrov repeated this argument in his statement at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, New York, on September 23, 2023 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2023).

## From Unipolar Hegemony Toward a Multipolar World

Francis Fukuyama's prophecy of the "end of history" and of "benevolent hegemony" promising world stability and prosperity was short-lived. The global hegemon's self-styled world leadership is in decline. The United States, as a self-sufficient system, has its own



*raison d'état*. Due to inherent differences in political interests and discourses, no one state can claim an impartial and disinterested representation of the interests of other sovereign states, nor could its legislation be a pure expression of universal “principles of law” (such as human rights). The policy of unilateralism in a unipolar world cannot respond to global problems, the solution or at least mitigation of which is impossible without the joint efforts of collaborative nations. The hegemon tries to preserve its domination using “hard” military power and the “soft” power of ideological influence and attraction. But nations that want to be independent resist and take counter-actions to defend their political, economic, and cultural sovereignty.

In the awakening will to freedom, the interests of the growing number of such countries naturally coincide, and they seek positive alternatives. The ideal alternative would not be for the dominating power to change hands, but to strive for a world *free* from any hegemonic domination. Non-Western powers form transcontinental regional alliances such as the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and BRICS (an economic association comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), which recently extended membership to Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. These are international structures of a new type, based on sovereign equality, a balance of interests, and consensus.

As a platform for economic, political, and cultural collaboration, BRICS enables intellectual dialogue to elaborate the philosophical foundations of the emerging multipolar world. Within this context, participants at the 20th Annual Meeting of the Valdai International Debate Club discussed ideas about an image of the future. As a state civilization, Russia proposed the civilizational approach based on the fundamental and long-term interests of states and peoples. If everyone is guided by this approach, there will be far fewer global conflicts, and the methods to resolve them will be much more rational and mutually respectful. This understanding and vision of the future was outlined from the Russian perspective as follows:

First. We want to live in an open, interconnected world, where no one will ever try to put artificial barriers in the way of people's communication, their creative fulfilment, and prosperity. [...]

Second. We want the world's diversity to be preserved and serve as the foundation for universal development. [...] Only true cultural and civilizational diversity will ensure peoples' well-being and a balance of interests.

Third, Russia stands for maximum representation. No one has the right or ability to rule the world for others and on behalf of others.

Fourth, Russia stands for universal security and lasting peace built on respect for the interests of everyone: from large countries to small ones. The main thing is to free international relations from the bloc approach and the legacy of the colonial era and the Cold War. We have been saying for decades that security is indivisible, and that it is impossible to ensure the security of some at the expense of the security of others.

Fifth, we stand for justice for all. [...] Everyone should be given access to the benefits of today's world, and attempts to limit it for any country or people should be considered an act of aggression.

Sixth, we stand for equality, for the diverse potential of all countries. This is a completely objective factor. But no less objective is the fact that no one is ready to take orders anymore or make their interests and needs dependent on anyone, above all on the rich and more powerful.

This is not just the natural state of the international community, but the quintessence of all of humankind's historical experience. These are the principles that we would like to follow and that we invite all of our friends and colleagues to join. (Valdai Club, 2023, paras. 1–7)



## Striving for Intercultural Philosophy: The Contributions of Russian and Latin American Philosophers

After 1991, the Russian Federation became a constitutional democracy. This facilitated the regaining of Russia's philosophical legacy and a broad dialogue with philosophers from Western Europe and the Americas and stimulated philosophical creativity in the country. Continuing and creatively developing the traditions of Russian thought, contemporary Russian philosophers make a significant contribution to intercultural philosophy. They defend the cultural diversity of the world, the right of original cultures to recognition and development, and the possibility and necessity of dialogical and peaceful intercultural relations. Their works contribute to the philosophical justification of the transition from a unipolar to a multipolar world.

Russia has become one of the loci of intercultural philosophy. Underpinned by Russian philosophy's dialogical tradition, the distinctive characteristic of Russian intercultural studies in philosophy is their dialogical orientation. Naturally, Russian philosophers promoted a view of culture as a whole, recognizing the diversity of these "wholes" as multiple national and historical types of cultures, each having its formative principle. Two aspects of culture—diversity and unity—were articulated.

In the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, studies of Latin American philosophy resulted in publications and collaborations with the journal *Concordia*. In 1986 the central philosophical journal *Voprosy Filosofii* published my article titled "The Latin American Philosophy of Liberation", and later its translation into Spanish in the journal *Ciencias Sociales* of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Demenchonok, 1988). It was the first publication in Russia (and perhaps the first or one of the first in Europe) in which the Latin American philosophy of liberation was recognized and seen as a new philosophical current.

The book *On the History of Philosophy of Latin America of the XX Century* (Zykova & Burgete, 1988) argued for the recognition of Latin American philosophy as a philosophical current, and it paved the way to the recognition of Russian philosophy and other culturally embedded expressions of philosophical thought. The very concept of philosophy and the history of philosophy needed to be rethought. In this regard, Russian philosophers were in solidarity with like-minded philosophers abroad.

Russian researchers of oriental philosophy also contributed to intercultural philosophy. For instance, Marietta Stepanyants studied interculturality through her research of philosophies of the East, particularly of India. Her book *Intercultural Philosophy: Origins, Methodology, Problems, Perspectives* (Stepanyants, 2020) focuses on intercultural philosophy as a methodology of knowledge and perspective for creating a new cartography of rationality. Intercultural dialogue is viewed in the context of global problems, including the ecological vector of civilizational development, the disastrous gap between economics and ethics, the expansion of the boundaries of philosophy and science, and the need for the moral improvement of society and of the individual. She relates the prospects for intercultural philosophy with "hopes and opportunities for discovering new, previously unknown solutions to universally significant problems" (p. 25).

Stepanyants (2023) further highlights the task of intercultural philosophy to connect its theory, humanistic ethical principles, and values with praxis:

The transformative role of intercultural philosophy means not only to awaken the consciousness of the need for positive change in social institutions and culture but also to help the formation of more humane and tolerant worldviews, of people's minds and hearts, *metanoia*. (p. 89)

The recognition of cultural diversity and dialogical relationships should become a norm that requires practical implementation. An important means of that is intercultural education.

Despite obstacles, Russian philosophers, showing their intellectual honesty and faithfulness to the truth and the noble ideals of humanity, contribute to intercultural philosophy:

Today, the ideals of the recognition of cultural diversity and of dialogical relationships, including between people with different social-cultural backgrounds, which are promoted by intercultural philosophy, are under attack from ultra-nationalistic compartmentalism and the hegemonic policy of *divide et impera*. But it is precisely this dramatic situation that makes the intercultural philosophy of dialogue so pertinent in grounding a viable alternative to both divisive fragmentation and homogenizing hegemonic integration. (Stepanyants, 2023, pp. 90–91)

Vladislav A. Lektorsky's works are devoted to a philosophical understanding of the problems that peoples and cultures are facing in the modern world. He stresses that understanding the open nature of culture and intercultural interactions moves beyond mere tolerance to more fruitful relationships of intercultural dialogue. Each culture may have its perspectives on how to solve certain common problems, and comparing them in dialogue can be fruitful in practice. Lektorsky (2023) also notes that intercultural dialogue requires a universal system of international law and global institutions. However, hegemonic policy exacerbates inequality, creates chaos, and impedes intercultural dialogue.

Andrei V. Smirnov (2019) offers an original view of intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue. He develops a logic-and-meaning approach to culture, which “defines culture as a way of making meaning” (Smirnov, 2019, p. 26). The logic-and-meaning approach is closely related to the conception of *vse-chelovecheskoye* (all-human, panhuman). It is rooted in Russian thought in Nikolay Danilevsky's idea of cultural-historical types, the worldwide responsiveness of Dostoevsky, and Solovyov's notion of *vseedinstvo* (omniunity). *Vse-chelovecheskoye* presupposes the intrinsic value and irreducibility of the logic of each culture. According to Smirnov (2013), “A plurality of reasons opens completely new perspectives for philosophy. We need a new philosophy—a philosophy capable of dealing with new realities and with the irreducible multiplicity of theoretical reasons” (p. 254). Thus, “a logic-and-meaning approach can serve to develop an effective approach to building a project for a multicivilizational world” (Smirnov, 2019, p. 28), corresponding to the transition to a multipolar or polycentric world in which Russia plays an increasing role.

The transitional period from a fading to a new world order is challenging for peoples and their leaders. It also poses specific challenges to philosophy, and it is high time for philosophers to respond to the social demand for answering pertinent questions about the current state of affairs and possibilities for the future.

Raúl Fornet Betancourt organized various initiatives that serve as important forums for intercultural communication between like-minded philosophers from across the world. These initiatives include the journal *Concordia* and its accompanying series *Concordia—Reihe Monographien*, a series of seminars for North-South dialogue, biannual International Congresses of Intercultural Philosophy, and the publication of congress proceedings. Such global philosophical dialogue serves as the epistemological and ontological foundation for intercultural dialogue.

Given its ethical-political position, intercultural philosophy corresponds to the vision of a world free of confrontation and wars. The whole idea of openness to the world, free of cultural and other barriers, the justification of the recognition of cultural diversity and of the unique cultures of minorities and former colonial nations, dialogical relations among peoples with different cultural-religious traditions, and the collaboration of na-



tions for solving social and global problems—all this should be the cornerstone of the emerging new world order.

Intercultural philosophy is ideally suited to meet these challenges. First, methodologically, it has a critical edge and rich experience in critiquing homogenizing hegemonic globalization and neocolonial deformations of cultures and persons. Second, and most importantly, it preserves and elaborates on a vision of a humanistic alternative, nurtured by the synergy of different cultural and civilizational traditions and articulating the universal human ideals of freedom, justice, and peace.

Unlike some philosophical currents that were indifferent to certain socio-cultural issues or locked within the liberal framework, intercultural philosophy remains faithful to its ethical-political orientation. In contrast to monologic Eurocentrism, American exceptionalism, and “liberal multiculturalism”, which merely gave lip service to diverse cultures and considered their own culture or truth to be superior or absolute, intercultural philosophy stands firmly for the recognition of cultural diversity and for providing material conditions for the preservation and flourishing of the unique cultures of minorities and former colonial nations. In contrast to culture wars’ political demagoguery, intercultural philosophy provides the grounding of the real possibility and normativity of dialogical relationships among diverse cultures as a condition of their flourishing. Moreover, this philosophy views the dialogical relationships among cultures as a model for such relationships in politics within society and among nations. These principles can be regained and serve the anti-hegemonic liberational movement for freedom and independent development of fully sovereign nations in dialogical and equal relationships.

The current transitional period also asks philosophy: “*Quo vadis?*” (Where are you going?). On the eve of the 21st century, **Fornet Betancourt (1999)** published the edited volume *Quo vadis, Philosophie? Antworten der Philosophen*, documenting the responses to a worldwide survey of more than 100 authors from different philosophical cultures. One of the survey’s goals was “to establish real internationalization about the most contemporary issues and their philosophical reflections”. While most questions were about the role of philosophy in the 20th century, the last question was: “Which tasks do you think should be given priority in philosophy at the beginning of the twenty-first century?” (p. 14). This question remains relevant. Today, it is vital for philosophers to determine what has been done during the first quarter of this century, to reassess it critically, and to reflect on what needs to be done for philosophy’s transformation for it to fulfill its role in society during its necessary transformation.

During the last three decades, intercultural philosophy has contributed significantly to laying the ground for cross-cultural reflections and intercultural dialogue in different dimensions: North-South, South-South, among representatives of different philosophical currents, and philosophers from various cultural and religious backgrounds. It has set the right tone and become a forum for the international philosophical community that can further evolve into a broad dialogue related to the problems of philosophy as a discipline, as well as many socio-cultural and global problems that require renewed philosophical reflection.

## Conclusions

The rise of global consciousness and anti-war movements led to the end of the Cold War in 1990 and created opportunities for a positive transformation of societies and international relations. However, these opportunities were torpedoed by the neoconservative “revolution” and the U.S. policy of global hegemony in a unipolar world, triggering a

new Cold War and the risk of a new world war, which threaten the future of humanity. The militarized hegemon holds humanity hostage to its policy.

What can philosophy do in the face of this critical situation? Decisions on war and peace are made by politicians, backed by states' power. But philosophy possesses the power of ideas, of human spirit and reason, and it is supported by the vast legacy of various cultural traditions, including the Russian and Latin American traditions of thought, which express age-old aspirations of peace. Those powerful ideas can influence public opinion and change the course of history. Philosophy plays the role of critical thinking and the constructive role of potentiation, i.e., making thinkable and therefore possible new things and worlds to come and thought become reality.

Philosophers can critically deconstruct the ideological myths that keep people dependent on and paralyzed by the promises of the narrative that the neoliberal economy provides prosperity, that "liberal democracy" grants justice for all, and that the self-styled "world leader" brings security and the solution to global problems. The hegemon has spread this mythologized narrative using "soft power", resulting in its acceptance by many as an illusory aspiration, a comforting lullaby of paternalized dependency, which creates public apathy and paralyzes independent thinking and socio-political activities. Philosophers can help people free themselves from these myths and regain their self-consciousness as political actors and subjects of cultural-historical creativity.

The realization that the bubble of this myth has burst may lead not only to disappointment but also to paralyzing despair. In the current crisis, hegemonic propaganda insinuates that "there is no alternative" to the preservation of the status quo. One may think it is counterfactual to talk seriously about intercultural philosophical dialogue in the current neo-totalitarian hegemonic environment. But it is precisely this dramatic situation that makes the intercultural philosophy of dialogue so pertinent in grounding a viable alternative to domination.

Intercultural philosophy provides a conceptual framework for promoting dialogical relationships. At its heart is dialogical philosophy and the conception of dialogical relationships at all levels—intersubjective, social, and intercultural. The principles of dialogical philosophy can be considered as a kind of theoretical basis for a new society. This philosophy can offer a positive alternative to the current global disorder and lead to social transformation and a post-hegemonic world order. It stands for cultural diversity and dialogical relationships, elaborates a vision of a humanistic alternative nurtured by the synergy of different cultural and civilizational traditions, and articulates ideals of a free, just, and peaceful world order to come.

Just as hegemonic designs and intercultural philosophy represent two different perspectives of the future, the strategies for achieving their goals are also different. The hegemonic superpower relies on force, imposes monologic dicta, and uses *divide et impera* tactics to dominate in a "controlled chaos". In contrast, intercultural philosophy is peace-seeking, defends freedom and equality, promotes morally good means for achieving moral goals, recognizes cultural diversity, and encourages dialogical relationships and the collaboration of peoples in pursuing common goals.

The peaceful alternative is attractive to many people and serves as a common ground for dialogues between people with different cultural backgrounds and worldviews who are keenly interested in the survival and prosperity of their families, communities, nations, and civilizations. People can use the internet and social media to establish solidary networks of associations, growing into a peaceful world community that can discuss and develop the theoretical aspects of war and peace, create strategies and tactics for



spreading and implementing peaceful ideas, influence political processes, and promote the democratic transformation of societies and international relations, aiming for a world order of freedom, justice, and peace.

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