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## REVIEWS AND NOTES

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### CHALLENGE OF GLOBAL VIOLENCE AND PHILOSOPHY OF PEACE AND COOPERATION

Alexander Novikov

**A review of *Philosophy after Hiroshima* edited by Edward Demenchonok, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.**

Among all numberless important events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki occupy a unique place. On the one hand, that was a barbarous act that shook even those who had gone through the horrors of the Second World War. On the other hand, those events led to the formation of a certain moral imperative – not to use nuclear weapons in any circumstances. Thus, one may say that they were an important mark in the development of philosophical worldview.

The twenty-first century started with the dreadful terrorist attack of September 2001, the war in Iraq, and the global financial-economic crisis. So, one can really agree that ‘it is continuing the history of global violence, which has escalated since the advent of nuclear weapons’ (p. 20).

The authors of the contributions to the reviewed volume *Philosophy after Hiroshima* edited by Edward Demenchonok analyze how philosophers of different schools interpret the problems of politically organized violence, war and peace. And they show that the ethics of peace in international relations is vitally important nowadays. The primary goal of the philosophers who have contributed to the volume is to demonstrate the absurdity of nuclearism in all times and to find world peace despite the diversity of their perspectives and political views. They all deeply understand that our world is in great need for awakening global consciousness; and the philosophical assessment of such issues can help coping with the challenges of global violence. And this is undoubtedly an undeniable virtue of the reviewed volume and its message.

As we live in the age of globalization, there is a danger that everything bad and violent may acquire a *global scale*. Moreover, this concerns everyone, especially the political leaders of all countries. They should realize that now as never before we are living under the threat of a total annihilation of humankind. And this problem allows no delay.

That is why an increasing number of philosophers, intellectuals and peace-movement activists continue to promote peaceful projects as the only viable alternative for the survival of humanity.

As is said in the introduction of the book ‘Our global problems – such as underdevelopment, the environmental crisis, and war in a world full of weapons of mass destruction – are interrelated and constitute a bewildering system of difficult challenges without obvious solutions’ (p. 2).

This volume is made up of four parts and seventeen essays which were originally presented at the Seventh World Congress of the International Society for Universal Dialogue (ISUD), entitled *After Hiroshima: Collective Memory, Philosophical Reflection and World Peace*, hosted in Hiroshima, Japan.

The first part called *Remembering the Past to Envision the Future* is formed by the essays by William C. Gay, Yasuhiro Inoue, Carol Rinnert and Edith Krause.

William C. Gay's essay, *Nuclear Weapons and Philosophy in the Twenty-First Century: The Relevance of Initial Philosophical Responses to the Atomic Bomb*, emphasizes the relevance of the first philosophical responses to Hiroshima and the beginning of the Atomic Age. Gay refers to the first thinkers such as Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Bertrand Russell and John Dewey who immediately assessed the Atomic Age. For example, Camus published his prophetic essay about it between the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. But his 'cry' was not heard – the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

Yasuhiro Inoue and Carol Rinnert in their essay analyze the newspaper coverage of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing. The authors study the articles published in newspapers between August 5 and August 8, 2005 in 12 countries around the world. They try to understand the national attitude toward those bombings judging by the amount of space devoted to it, graphic depiction of the bomb's effects, etc. As a matter of fact, the results are different. In addition, their essay presents the results of the public opinion polls in various countries surveying the attitude toward the Atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Although, in my opinion this kind of analysis cannot give us a full picture, nevertheless, I find this research quite interesting and informative.

The next essay by Edith H. Krause *Ashes and Roses: Response and Responsibility after Auschwitz and Hiroshima* is devoted to two poems that deal with two cataclysmic events of the twentieth century: Paul Celan's 'Deathfugue' and Marie Luise Kaschnitz's 'Hiroshima' (p. 97). Auschwitz and Hiroshima – the names alone are enough to place horrific images of death and destruction in one's mind.

The second part, *Nuclear Amnesia and the Metaphysics of the New Warfare*, includes five essays.

Robin Gerster's essay, *Citing Hiroshima: Nuclear Amnesia and Atomic Bomb Testimony* gives the literature review of Atomic bombings' coverage. Special attention is paid to the *hibakusha* testimonies which attempt to describe the indescribable.

The next essay *War and Space and Reversal: Paul Virilio's Apocalypse* by Graham Harman has the goal to develop an alternative framework for thinking about warfare trying to illustrate present-day events more calmly, as if they were happening in the distant past (p. 141). Harman touches upon three themes: Paul Virilio's 'dromology'; the U.S. Marine Corp's concept of Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW); and the application of the generational model to recent history of philosophy.

The author of the essay *Hiroshima, the American Empire, and the U.S. War in Iraq* Rodney Peffer uses the principles of Just War theory and international law to analyze the Atomic bombings and Iraqi War. In the conclusion he inspires hope that we are approaching a time when we may be able to rid the world of large-scale war once and for all (p. 190). But I think this statement is a too optimistic assessment. It is very difficult to maintain the peace nowadays because to my great regret wealth and power still play significant role in the world and are the main reason of the most wars in our times.

Harry van der Linden's essay entitled *From Hiroshima to Baghdad: Military versus Just Military Preparedness* examines the 'military hegemony' of the United States. Also he formulates five principles of just military preparedness.

Robert Ivie's chapter, entitled *Depolarizing the Discourse of American Security: Constitutive Properties of Positive Peace in Barack Obama's Rhetoric of Change*, critically engages the polarizing discourse of American security, through which the dominance of war has been rationalized and normalized. In fine, he extracts and examines certain constitutive properties of positive peace from Barack Obama's presidential campaign rhetoric. Ivie identifies three democratizing attributes consistent with peace-building purposes: hybridity, complementarity, and reflexivity.

The chapters of the next part, *The Universality of the Ideal of Peace in a Culturally Diverse World*, concern the problem of peace. How to achieve it?

Keping Wang analyzes Laozi's thoughts as the founder of early Daoism about the war in the essay *The Anti-War Philosophy in Early Daoism*. 'Three treasures' proposed by Laozi as means to prevent wars are examined by Wang. Concluding the paper the author says that if we all act against warfare by reconsidering the Daoist way of thought from now onwards, the course of human history in the future will be different from what it was before (p. 285–286).

Christopher Fox analyzes the problem of forgiveness referring to Hegel's philosophy in her essay *Is Nothing More Important than Forgiveness? Hiroshima, Hegel, and the Speculative Truths of Forgiveness*. The author is convinced that within Western philosophy, it is Hegel who sees more perspicaciously than others into this mysterious forgiveness (p. 290).

The next four essays by Albert Anderson, Edward Demenchonok, William McBride and David Rasmussen also refer to the philosophy of the last centuries, for instance, they consider Kant's philosophy as one of the main sources for analysis regarding the problems of war and peace.

Albert Anderson in his essay entitled *The Case for Lasting Peace* suggests choosing the way that leads to perpetual war and the graveyard or the cosmopolitan idea proposed by Kant – the concept that all people are members of a common world community – and turn toward lasting peace (p. 328).

Edward Demenchonok in his voluminous essay *Human Rights: Imperial Designs versus Cosmopolitan Order* analyzes the present discussions on cosmopolitanism. He argues that the true solution to the problems of securing peace and protecting human rights can be achieved only by peaceful means based on updating and strengthening international law and institutions, such as a reformed United Nations, and aiming for a gradual realization of the ideal of cosmopolitan order of law and peace.

*Popoki Peace Project: Creating New Spaces for Peace*, the essay written by Ronnie Alexander, is about the project which was established in Japan in 2006. It is quite an interesting method of achieving piece in the world with the help of a cat, names Popoki, who leads this project. Drawing pictures and sharing it with each other helps to build friendship and support people through the disasters and personal troubles.

William L. McBride in his essay *Philosophy as Global Dialogue and the Rejection of Gratuitous Military Violence*, argues that the teaching and dissemination of the philosophical discipline is especially suited to provide antidotes to gratuitous military violence. The dual tendencies in philosophical thinking are examined by the author:

an openness to all questions and all possibilities and a quest for consistency and system (p. 419).

David M. Rasmussen in his essay *Conflicted Modernity: Toleration as a Principle of Justice* contends that toleration must be conceived as a principle of justice, based on respect for the law, within a society in which others' rights as well as other cultures must be respected. The author distinguishes various concepts of toleration, reflecting its different levels.

The editor of this volume, Edward Demenchonok, presented his second essay in the last part, entitled *Rethinking Cultural Diversity: Intercultural Discourse and Transculturality*. He analyzes the issues of cultural identity and intercultural relations and their interpretation in Latin American and Afro-Caribbean philosophy.

The essay by Mikhail Epstein *On Creativity in Philosophy: Toward Cultural Proletarianism and Philosophy of the Possible* gives an original approach to the transformation of philosophy. He explores the principal stages in the historical evolution of philosophy as a series of paradigmatic shifts in its prevailing modalities.

Concluding the review, I should say that Demenchonok has edited a book that serves as a reminder that the threat posed to civilization by nuclear weapons persists, as does the need for continuing philosophical reflection on the nature of war, the problem of violence, and the need for a workable ethics in the Atomic Age. The issues of war and peace, human rights, toleration, the politics of memory, intercultural dialogue, the ethics of co-responsibility, and cosmopolitan order raised in the contributions are intrinsically linked by the two major motifs: the philosopher's concerns about escalating global violence and the need for an alternative of peace and cooperation.

What one should also point as a merit of the volume is the fact that the authors of the essays analyze what Hiroshima means for us not within the postmodernist doctrine but basing on the constructivist paradigm.

It must be noted that the book is well-organized, there is a subject index, index of names and a very informative introduction.

Problems of peace were important for Philosophy starting from the times of its origins. It is very important to guarantee the continuation of this tradition in the age of globalization. That is why (let alone the high academic quality of this volume) it will be of interest for a wide circle of philosophers, intellectuals and all the people who want to live in peace.

#### NOTE

\* It appears appropriate to mention that another article by William Gay (2010) was published in the first issue of the *Journal Globalization Studies*, in which one can also find his analysis of problems of war and peace.

#### REFERENCE

- Gay, W.  
2010. Globalization, the Problem of War, and Normative Issues. *Journal of Globalization Studies* 1(1): 141–149.