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# Man the State and War, by Kenneth N. Waltz

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MAN, THE STATE, AND WAR. By Kenneth N. Waltz. New York: Columbia University Press. 1959. Pp. vii, 213. \$5.50.

The present volume seeks to delineate the contributions made to our knowledge of war and peace by certain representative thinkers in the field of classical political theory. The thought systems of Spinoza, Kant, and Rousseau are described in alternate chapters. Each formulation of the war-peace problem is followed by an analytical statement concerning the difference it makes in our thinking about war and peace and in the implementation of public policy. The final chapter attempts to relate the views of Spinoza and Kant to the one developed by Rousseau. The question which Professor Waltz attempts to answer directly is whether the writings of the classical political theorists provide any clues to the founding of methods whereby the frequency of military hostilities may be reduced and periods of peace prolonged. The theme of a lasting or eternal peace is not explored.

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The three different notions of war causation examined are neatly set forth in the title which Professor Waltz affixed to his study. However, the term *war* should be set off in quotation marks to indicate that what is intended is not military action but a state of affairs which makes such action both necessary and inevitable. Spinoza found the cause of war (military combat) in the original nature of man; Kant in the internal organization or structure of states; Rousseau in the system of relationships of states to one another. Fighting or battle action occurs because men are evil; individual states are defectively constituted; or because states stand in a relationship of "war" to one another.

The conditions of peace (the absence of military combat), may be similarly formulated. Military combat can be eliminated from human affairs (Western Civilization) when the original nature of man is altered; states are differently constituted; or the nature of the community-of-states system is somehow renovated or entirely abolished. Each of these prescriptions for peace follows from a unique premise. Since it is men who do the fighting, it is their nature to do so. Secondly, since it is in the name of the state that battlefield operations are begun and endured, a reconstruction of the domestic political structure of the separate states is the answer. Finally, since war occurs among states, the problem of peace resides in the elimination of states.

The terms of peace contained, by implication, in the three war causation theories expounded could be impossible of attainment. No arrangement could be contrived, political or otherwise, which could curb or alter the disposition to fight inherent in man's original nature. While states could be reformed, it is not true that only "bad" states make war. People's governments have as sorry a record on that score as authoritarian regimes. England has devoted as many years to warfare as Russia. Germany, the *enfant terrible* of the twentieth century, has spent fewer years, by far, in warfare than any of the great powers. Lastly, the abolition of the state-war system could leave so much to be desired by European man, that only a Quaker would dare face the consequences of the change. The absence of fighting is not the only good sought by modern man. He also wishes to order his affairs as he sees fit within a scheme of use and wont. To suppose that he could be persuaded to exchange this freedom to be parochial for eternal peace could be imposing an asking price higher than will be offered.

There is a paradox in all of this, however. Our age also rebels at the prospect that the incidence of battlefield operations may be beyond control and peace only a dream. The first and second war causation theories can be easily demolished. The original-nature-of-man theory can

be set aside with the remark that a theory which explains everything explains nothing. If men are by nature disposed to fight, they are also by nature inclined to non-violence. A nation-state may spend more years at war in a single century than at peace, but even the most warlike nation-state devotes some time to peace. An entire community of states may endure a respite from military action. For six years after the conclusion of the Second Great Northern War between Russia and Sweden, not one of the then great European powers was at war with another. The great powers were at relative peace with one another from 1871 to 1914, or for nearly half a century.

The second theory of war causation begs the question. The various formulations encountered all begin with the original state of nature and the feral man myth. The differentiation of society and the state does not appear to be made. It is assumed that states are a precondition of social life; that before men can live in decency and freedom there must be states. But states also make war upon one another. Therefore, resort must be had to an expedient or device to resolve the dilemma created by the assumption that states are the precondition of society and the historical fact that states are also warlike entities. The device used to accomplish the resolution of this dilemma is the spontaneous harmony of interest principle applied to the relationships of states to one another. The true interests of the common people or the working classes everywhere coincide. People's governments are peaceful; class governments are war prone.

Rousseau's theory of war causation is, of course, not a causation theory at all. It describes a condition of affairs existing between historical entities. Given the nature of the social life created when men removed themselves from the state of nature, explanations seeking to account for the recurrent outbreaks of military hostilities between states become trivial, and the search for the conditions of peace a quest for a chimera. Any "accident," beginning with the shape of a woman's nose or her taste in dancing partners, can cause a war, just as any event in a class can cause a broken bone. Each state is by its nature so related to every other state that any one of the innumerable transactions and contacts which occur or exist between them can precipitate a round of military hostilities. International understanding instead of resolving the war problem may actually make it more acute. So long as two states remain in the world, there can be no durable and lasting peace. Moreover, to speak of a single world state is an anachronism.

The obvious solution to the war-peace problem, if Rousseau's analysis about such things is the correct one, is the abolition of the European community-of-states system. World government growing out of a recog-

dition of the facts of ecology and demography is the answer. But Professor Waltz submits that peace is not the primary goal of men living in states. If it were, any population aggregate residing within a state could have peace by merely surrendering its right to political self-determination or freedom. Since that is not likely to happen, because the issue immediately becomes "Who will rule the world?", there is no solution to the war-peace problem in sight. Like the late John Foster Dulles, Professor Waltz appears to believe that peace can be a screen behind which evil men can perpetrate their wrongs. The virus of patriotism is ineradicable in the culture of European man, and a peace without honor unthinkable. The propagation of his culture and the survival of the race is not all that the common man has been taught to live for in the West.

Having thought his way into the *cul de sac* of making the state a precondition of society as well as a social institution, Professor Waltz makes a virtue of eclecticism. If we cannot stomach Rousseau, we can mix in equal dashes of Spinoza and Kant. Rousseau's view of man in the state is, of course, both sensible and realistic. But it is also utopian because it implies the abolition of the state as the road to peace. That once again brings up the discouraging question of who is to rule the world. Obviously, if the United States cannot rule the world, Americans will rule themselves. They like it better that way. If wars cannot be abolished, then what can be done is to postpone them, anticipate them in preparedness and preventive action, and once begun end them victoriously and quickly. All of this comes down to a matter of public policy based on knowledge of how things are and work.

In this scheme of thought, the Spinozist and Kantian formulations of war causation become the two captions under which may be subsumed the many "accidents" of Rousseau which precipitate the recurrent outbreaks of military hostilities within the European political system. So long as states exist there will be wars. That is the structure of world politics. The forces which determine the frequency of battle field operations are found in (a) the original nature of man, and (b) in the internal or domestic organization of states. "Bad" men acting as agents of "good" states can be the cause of the frequency of military combat. "Good" men acting as agents of "bad" states are impelled to make policy decisions which unavoidably do the same thing.

If, as Professor Waltz avers, asking the right kinds of questions gets on with the business of problem solving, then the study in review is wanting. There is need to abandon the state of nature and feral man myth and the logic which it promotes in thinking about political affairs. The question which needs to be asked is not, "Who will rule the world?",

should some deviant succeed in persuading the American people to unilaterally disarm in a world of hydrogen bombs, but "Are states necessary?" It is the opinion of this reviewer that the Western world has had enough of political instrumentalism. The state is not a pre-condition of society. Right relations among men are not the invention of conquerors and kings. People lived "decent lives" long before the appearance of the warrior and the state, and will, presumably, continue to do so long after the warrior as a social type and the state as a social institution have joined the limbo of forgotten things. That is the positive lesson which the behavioral sciences with an anthropological persuasion have to teach, and the one which political scientists generally do not heed.

Professor Waltz is, of course, right in chiding the behavioral scientist for his political immaturity. The solution of the war problem cannot be comprehended within the formula of individual and social adjustment. The road blocks to peace are, on the other hand, not exactly political either. They also have a sociological aspect. Dismantling the culture of Europe's war-made empire system and the scheme of social stratification based upon it, even under the best auspices, staggers the imagination. But the auspices under which the cause of world peace will have to be faced are, as Rousseau opined, not the best. The abolition of the war-state system would make the underlying population independent of the warrior and master classes and incorrigible. Lasting peace would threaten upper class prerogatives of lordship and exploitation, and introduce a renovation in the organization of European life unknown since, perhaps, ancient times. In prospect of eventualities such as these, the warrior and master classes could always be counted upon to throw their weight on the side of "war" and not peace.

This formulation of the war-peace problem is now something of a common place. Everyone has heard of George Orwell's phrase, "perpetual war for perpetual peace." It is for this reason to be regretted that Professor Waltz did not give his readers the whole account of Rousseau's formulation of the war-peace problem.

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