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ORGANIZED VIOLENCE AND
COMMUNICATION POLICY.
CONFLICT AS NARRATIVE

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ORGANIZED VIOLENCE AND COMMUNICATION POLICY. CONFLICT AS NARRATIVE

Abstract:

Terrorism is, however illegitimate it may be, a tool of politics staged by bloodshed. The violence is part of terrorism, but terrorism is not just violence, in fact, violence is not the most important of terrorism, but the speech that it serves or whose promotion is looking for. The center of gravity of the struggle against violence is thus in the narrative to which it belongs without which actions loses its meaning and direction.

Keywords

Narrative, discourse, terrorism, dirty warfare.

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If names be not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language be not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success... Therefore a superior man considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately, and also that what he speaks may be carried out appropriately. What the superior man requires is just that in his words there may be nothing incorrect.¹

Confucius

1. LANGUAGE AND VIOLENCE

It is commonly believed that war belongs exclusively to Mars, but this is not true. In the Greek pantheon, everything is intertwined, and nothing is exclusive. Thus war also belongs to Athena, protector of Athens democracy, goddess of intelligence, language and dialogue, but also goddess of smart, just war. It is no surprise that she is the goddess of just war, because war is a form of communication and justice is linked to words. War is more than just violence; it is also words and language.

We can find the relationship between narrative and society all over Confucius' works, given that language expresses the force of human relations and is structured around them. Moreover, societies as a whole are structured around words, which change whenever society changes. That is why Confucius suggested that the first thing the government should do was to change the names of things, because if names are not correct then every action is bound to be profoundly wrong.

In every conflict, it is absolutely essential to comprehend its nature, to be able to notice its nuances, and, in this, language is key. Without this first step, it will be impossible to successfully solve the conflict. The name given to a conflict (or, more precisely, the name accepted by the community) is crucial. This is always the first priority, because wrong words produce havoc.

A conflict, or a war, is always a dialogue with added violence. Just like in any process of dialogue and exchange, empathy and otherness are fundamental, as well as to know oneself, to know others, to know the environment and to know one's goals. As Clausewitz reminds us, "*the first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and the*

¹ YAÑEZ, Manuel. Confucio. Published by EDIMAT Libros, Madrid 1998, p. 96.

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commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.”²

Narratives are not neutral. Choosing them rightly makes it possible to be in an advantageous position. Therefore, one of the first and main terrains of conflict is language. Language defines the framework and determines the rules of the conflict. It is of paramount importance to choose the words that are to be used, to define which ones are important and to appropriate them. Legitimacy comes from words. When words are used and have been assigned, it is very difficult to change the conceptual framework of the conflict, and politics falls behind.

There is not a biunivocal correspondence between word and concept, and, therefore, misuse is always possible without the public opinion noticing. It is even possible to present the same idea in different ways to different public opinions with the same words, either simultaneously or as time goes by.

2. TERRORISM AND POLITICS

Terrorism is not just violence. It is, as Mao said, politics with bloodshed: the use of violence (or the threat of using it) to advance a political project. Moreover, if, as it has been pointed out, war is basically an act of communication with added violence, then terrorism is a political activity characterized by a certain bloodshed.

Terrorism, then, is a tool of politics, as illegitimate as it may be. Violence is always a part of terrorism, but terrorism is not just violence. In fact, violence is not the most important element of terrorism, even though it is the one that delegitimizes it. The most important element of terrorism is the discourse it serves or promotes. In Sartre’s words, “*actions come before hope.*”

² CLAUSEWITZ, Carl Von. Of War T.I. Ministry of Defense, 1999, p. 183.

Terrorism modulates and measures out violence by attacking society's nodes with the goal of destabilizing it, forcing it to transform into whatever it advocates for: "*order comes out of chaos and chaos is needed to found a new order.*"³

One of the most important elements of terrorism is its media strategy. Success depends inextricably on developing a media policy that guides and coordinates actions in the strategic and tactical fields. Quoting Bin Laden himself, "*It is obvious that the media war in this century is one of the strongest methods of warfare; in fact its ratio may reach 90 percent of the total preparation for battles.*"

The first battles do not involve violence. Terrorism is an expressive, symbolic struggle. Violence is the way to gain legitimacy for the cause and thus be able to become the representative of a social group, a representative that holds the truth and avenges all affronts. It is a bloody narrative that is more discrediting than destructive.

Obviously, terrorism does not attempt to be decisive while it cannot impose its ideas by force. What it does is show a power it does not really have through an efficient media campaign; it is only viable when it has the attention of the social group it claims to represent, of the government it fights or of society as a whole. This is critical in analyzing and responding to terrorism.

In this regard, it is a limited engagement, and extreme model of asymmetric war in which the battlefield has been reduced to its minimum extent. Consequently, victory can only be limited or indirect, that is, obtained as the result of a negotiation of process. In fact, terrorism does not seek to defeat its opponent; it does not even seek its exhaustion. All it wants is an image of that. The small number of terrorist cells is ideal to operate (secrecy demands it), not to win, and terrorist groups do not have the human or intellectual capacity to handle victory by themselves.

³ GLUCKSMANN, André. The Discourse of War Published by Editorial Anagrama, Barcelona 1969, p.81.

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Terrorism is a media phenomenon that involves tactical actions carried out to attain political influence. Its actions go beyond the scope of the goal itself. Its practices are exactly the same for an advertisement company: a message, symbolism and a surprising, unexpected effect in order to get the attention of the target public, including its different segments and audience. It is a show always looking for new viewers, a show that sheds light on controversial issues, a show in which the goals and symbols attacked are more important than the victims, who become just numbers.

Clausewitz said that "*fighting is a trial of strength of the moral and physical forces by means of the latter*"⁴, and so is a terrorist attack. In the same way, as Glucksmann points out, "*By its reality, war is a test of strength, by its need it is proof of sense. It physically opposes forces that are never purely physical and material.*"⁵ These actions have a great symbolic meaning with which terrorists intend to prove the group's capabilities, resolve and representativeness.

It is a fake war, given that terrorism only shows a fiction of power. As a result, a terrorist attack must be assessed, firstly, in terms of media impact, and, secondly, in terms of psychological impact. This Machiavellian strategy mixes up force and power; however, the assessment needs to be done in global terms, as well as by measuring the equivalence between politics and strategy, its coherence and allegiance. Force, if not well targeted, is of no use.

Besides, violence and force are not necessarily the essential element here. In the words of Glucksmann "... *war is a clash of discourses which is not won by the best ... but by that one covering the whole battlefield. The most warrior like speech triumphs... War not only sets the conditions of all communication: it is in itself communication.*"⁶

Terrorism always acts in representation of a more or less considerable social group, which the terrorist organization claims to be the whole of society. The population thus becomes

⁴ CLAUSEWITZ, Carl Von. Of War T.I. Cited work, p. 343.

⁵ GLUCKSMANN, André. The Discourse of War. Cited work, p.81.

⁶ Ibidem, p.83.

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the goal and the target of the struggle; it is a fight for legitimacy, and, if protracted, it is an evidence of failure. The problem with terrorists is that their real power is usually confounded with the noise they make, and therefore the bigger picture gets lost.

Violence may be useless or wrong depending on the timeframe (which can change) it is designed for, but it is not correct to consider it always wrong. It can be useful for whoever creates it, for violence is a form of communication, very important for the media in a postmodern, postheroic society that rejects the idea of death.

The thing is, it is not always that useful, because the longer it takes, the more the legitimacy of whoever uses it diminishes. When terrorist violence extends without creating a social movement, society becomes aware of the dangers of new adventures, and the goals terrorists try to accomplish by blood get discredited. It is Danton's blood.

To avoid this, violence is dissociated from the political project. This project is left on the side, but it benefits from the violent successes, that is why terrorist groups tend to segregate from the political parties, mass movements or social organizations they emerge from. On the other hand, terrorism is negation, not construction, which is why it must be part of a wider political strategy that includes other groups. These groups have a symbiotic relationship with terrorists, a relationship that is always as implicit as evident. Venus (wife of blacksmith Hephaestus) and her lover Mars side by side.

Sartre postulated that "*when violence wants to be acknowledged, it can bring this about only through violence. Violence carries its own justification, that is, it claims the right to violence just because of being. Violence is the alteration of the total cycle of means, and, therefore, the end. Violence is not another means to an end, but a deliberate choice of the end whatever the means.*"⁷

Another common claim is to think that terrorists lack ethics. And that is not true; they have their own ethics. They are not psychopaths. A terrorist needs a morality that allows him to embrace violence. He needs to find a moral space that justifies it, thus making him not

⁷ GARCÍA CANEIRO, José. La racionalidad de la guerra (The rationality of war). Published by Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid, 2000., pp. 111 y ss.

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responsible. His actions are not a product of choice, but a necessary consequence of the circumstances. Usually, the terrorist sees himself as irresponsible, as a mere extension of the arm of history or religion.

Giving his life for the cause is a way to prove that it had a meaning by showing faith and commitment when acting so boldly, but, unfortunately, it entails taking someone else's life. As Jefferson said, "*The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.*" A suicide terrorist attack joins both crime and justice; the catharsis makes its impact three times more significant. We are not talking about reason here, but about an eminently emotional process.

With every attack, terrorists attempt to create a pedagogy that first shakes people up to get an audience and be able to put their demands on the table. Thus they fix the rules for making the attack, and they also impose the wording used in its development. The media presence will have a multiplying effect that will get every terrorist attack and discussions about it to every home in a simple, repeated, direct way. Questions are the first step. In this fashion, what used to be inconceivable becomes conceived, then accepted, then it is seen as natural and, finally, it is deemed inevitable.

Terrorism is offensive, it is an action made by the soul, by the force of will, carried out by strongly motivated people. That is exactly what makes it so dangerous. Of the three elements of Clausewitz's trinity, people's emotions become the critical factor. Emotions are related to mobilization. To activate emotions, to find the mechanism that makes them rise, is the key to victory, because it means that terrorists and the people get mixed up.

Terrorist actions show a conflict between different capabilities and strategic models. This prevents the isomorphism in military strategies Clausewitz talked about. That isomorphism would force parties to imitate one another and to use all the power they have. However, terrorists cannot end up as soldiers or else the state's defeat will be final, because what is at stake in the battle is legitimacy itself. The same could be said about soldiers becoming terrorists. Therefore, legitimacy is only kept by refusing the challenge to fight, but this in turn creates great tension between rationality and emotions after every terrorist attack.

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Attacks are not meant to be isolated actions. Instead, they are a concurrent part of the discourse of the terrorist group, which guides and gives a meaning to violence. The terrorist narrative thus includes action, a message and a cause. The discourse is in the center of the spiritual dimension, it is the backbone that guarantees the integration of material and immaterial elements. According to Schelling, it "*communicates through actions more than words, or through actions added to words, and actions become a form of communication.*" The means is part of the message.

3. EMOTION, NARRATIVE AND VIOLENCE

Man is not lineal, but a contradictory reality, with many different facets. The greater the progress, the greater the internal contradiction. There cannot be just one mathematical approach to man's problems. As some authors have shown regarding radical Islamism, radical leaders tend to come from a scientific background (doctors, engineers...) from which they approach and solve social and human issues.

The Greek divide between body and soul is incompatible with the integral nature of humans, a nature in which the rational and the irrational are consubstantial and inseparable. In this line, and applying this methodology to understand it, Europe's problem might be the lack of an emotional background, which could be added to the rationality of the Union's benefits. Because the Union has not yet found these emotional elements (at least not to their full extent), it cannot be said it is a community yet.

All societies share stories, usually including episodes of either heroism or suffering, about their past that are not always real, given that there is a fair amount of myth in them. To narrate is to tell, to seduce, to describe reality from a subjective point of view; it is a mix of emotions presented in rational terms.

A narrative, a story, a discourse, they all are a selection of facts made with more or less accuracy and freedom that leads to a pre-established collective imagination. Everything can

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be included as long as it is an act of creation, or an act of will, that incorporates rational and irrational elements predetermined by the intuited end. It is a bridge between the tacit and the explicit.⁸ It is a mechanism through which knowledge and “truth” are spread, while a group identity gets created. It is, in short, a generating, socializing and “possibiliting” element, because anyone that interprets it gets a spot on the stage as another actor, which is why it is so effective.

Because of this, it is not immutable. On the contrary, it evolves and adapts, incorporating present elements if they are related to the envisioned future, a future that is usually as vague as based on emotions. Communication changes to maintain the essence the same to be still attractive without getting boring⁹. If it is boring, mobilization will be disastrous.

Every information transmission has a space in the discourse, whatever channel is used. New technologies make it easier and easier for the parties to spread their message, using not just one, but many channels simultaneously.¹⁰

The discourse shapes and models the conflict, whereas the conflict, in biunivocal correspondence, influences and determines the discourse. Both are inextricably related, because both are part of a whole.¹¹ Narratives matter in the political arena, as they shape the perceptions that condition the decision-making process: “*politics does not respond to facts, but to perceptions, and they are in part constructed by means of these accounts and narratives.*”¹²

⁸ LINDE, Charlotte. “Narrative and social tacit knowledge”

<http://cseweb.ucsd.edu/~goguen/courses/papers/linde-narr-tacit.pdf>

⁹ Narrative also evolves, adapts and reinvents itself. It presents change as natural. White becomes black, black, green, green, white, but the narrative manages to present this in a coherent, natural, credible way. The persecuted are now the prosecutors, the prosecutors, persecuted, victory becomes defeat, and joy becomes suffering. (PÉREZ NÚÑEZ, Pedro Antonio. “*La paz y el fin de las narrativas.*” (Peace and the end of narratives) Monografía del Curso de Estado Mayor, 2012.)

¹⁰ IBIDEM.

¹¹ IBIDEM.

¹² SANAHUJA, Jose Antonio. “The Rashomon Effect: Approaches to Multilateralism and Global Governance in the “Atlantic Triangle”. Madrid: 2011.

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As the American official doctrine says:

*"The main mechanism for the diffusion and absorption of ideologies is the narrative. A narrative is an organized whole of ideas expressed as an account (story). Narratives are fundamental to represent an identity, particularly the collective identity of religious, national and cultural groups. Accounts (stories) about the history of a community provide models about how actions and their consequences relate, and they are often the basis for the designing of strategies and for the interpretation of other actors' intentions."*¹³

A narrative of violence is, therefore, a constructed whole of ideas, not entirely false, but incomplete, and it does not necessarily have to be violent. It may be an ideology, a religion, a cult's doctrine... But it always presents itself with a selection of facts, benchmarks and points of reference between what is real and what is not.

A terrorist attack attempts to draw attention to the narrative, to make it visible and advertise its ideas. The narrative tries to guide and give sense to the violence, to give it continuity and permanence so that it is justified. Thus, the debate, the message and the cause are interrelated and interdependent with violence.

In his work *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud said that violence arises more when there are small differences than when differences are great, when acknowledgement is possible, but otherness is not. The great crimes of humanity have been based not on facts, but on narratives, on justifying, exculpatory fantasies: the pogroms, the persecutions... German Jewish, the first that came out of the ghetto and integrated into society, became separated from that society, first, and then were annihilated, all because a minor thing as religion, which in the West belongs to the private sphere, thanks to the psychological distance created by difference.

According to Ignatieff:

"The narcissism of minor differences is a leap into collective fantasy which enables threatened or anxious individuals to avoid the burden of thinking for themselves or even

¹³ MANUAL FM3.0 OPERATIONS. U.S. Army, 2008, Section I 66.

thinking of themselves as individuals. Equally, tolerance will depend on the capacity to individualize others.”¹⁴

Narratives do not describe reality but create it, generating a space that is meant to be ethical and necessary to host sectarian violence. Narrative is thus a product of “*internal use despite its intent to be universal. It is only valid for the side that defends it with the goal of increasing hostility with the other side, which does not accept that ideology or promotes another one.*”

¹⁵

Narratives are presented as secular religions whose proposals, because they are so repeated, might even be classified as millenarian. Narratives are power, tools of political persuasion more effective than arguments, and very difficult to deactivate. They are neither natural nor objective.

In addition, narratives have their own way to reinterpret both facts and even themselves, their rationality, everything to keep their emotional coherence with its goals, which are longed for and unavoidable. Reality and facts are always reinterpreted to match the goals. Narratives are tools, they have been called instruments of mobilization, but whoever uses them rides a tiger: once the tiger starts moving, it is almost impossible to control.

If there is a common element in all violent narratives, that is the use of silence. Some aspects are emphasized, while others are suspiciously forgotten. Narratives carry the ability to identify and praise what is important from their perspective, the milestones of their project. They always pick their debates, and whatever they do not like is not mentioned in the debate, but it is forgotten.

Narratives are constructed with an end, and therefore they respond to certain expectations. Their function is to make reality coherent and intelligible, presenting it as rational when it is just an intended oversimplification. They create a space where a given perception is developed, a perception that pretends to be free and not determined, although it hardly accomplishes that goal.

¹⁴ IGNATIEFF, Michael. The Warrior's Honor. Published by Taurus, Madrid 1999, p. 65.

¹⁵ FREUND, Julián. Sociología del conflicto. (Sociology of Conflict) Published by the Army, Madrid, 1995, p. 174.

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Narratives do not generate a static concept, but one that is open, discursive, full of socio-cultural diachrony, a concept that mixes together the being and the evolution of the individual and those of the group, by using psychology and history¹⁶, which, in turn, are related to violence. In this regard, a narrative may incarnate a predator identity.

It may be counterintuitive, but it is the truth: narratives and terror present themselves as rational, but they are not. They are emotional, and they try to influence perceptions. That is why it is so interesting to see what they exclude, for they do so in order to reinforce the discourse, the message and the wording. It is precisely by omitting what weakens the discourse and what is incoherent that it is reinforced. But humans are not incoherent, nor a lineal product. Quoting Freund:

*"Ideology is not about whether, for instance, there is a contradiction between the idea of freedom and that of equality: it excludes those that pose a similar question as enemies... The desire of exclusion is even a typical characteristic of ideology, for this sets what the truth is, an apparent truth founded essentially on the dissimulation of difficulties or of the theoretical and practical incompatibilities."*¹⁷

An ideological narrative allows for an omniscient approach to the fact it wants to explain. Furthermore, it rejects —unless promoted as dogmas— what it is left out of the logic it follows, and thus it provides men with the exact references they need. As Munkler claims, *"the focus on ideological façades...satisfied at the same time the necessity of seeing the whole picture and of easily seeing it."*¹⁸

Therefore, ideological narratives aim at *"feelings, even passion and imagination, in search of the wonderful. They find their support in great words and great ideas with eschatological connotation, such as freedom, equality, justice, happiness and peace. The content of those concepts is never explained, and the conditions for their realization are never specified. It is only said that their realization is possible with political and economic action that is specific"*

¹⁶ CONDE, Ana C. "Los cíclopes de la Cultura. Cultura y guerra en Nietzsche" (Cyclops of Culture. Culture and War in Nietzsche). Work Cited.

¹⁷ FREUND, Julián. Sociología del conflicto (Sociology of Conflict) Work Cited, p. 174.

¹⁸ MÜNKLER, Herfried The New Wars. Published by Siglo XXI de España Editores, Madrid 2002, p. 119.

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and immediate. They do not have any individual or critical thinking arising from either doubt or thorough information.”¹⁹

In the modern world, it is much easier to oppose everything than to explain one's actions. The simplicity of this kind of narrative, the constant reiteration of its message, greatly strengthens it from the political communication perspective. In addition, such an assertive staging, which even includes the taking of other people's lives in addition to one's own sacrifice, sends a message of conviction that is very useful in the spreading of the narrative's postulates and in making the ideological opponent hesitate.

These narratives play the victim, they set up some mythical origins about defeat, and at the same time they make up a heroic, valiant background. As St. Paul said, to lose in order to win. They always see things from a pessimistic perspective.

In reality, it is nothing but a somewhat attractive prosaicism coupled with a bunch of not very suggestive facts. These narratives are not the ultimate way of assessment, but an emotion arising from an exciting proposal, as far from reality as it may be.

The result is, as Juaristi says, a cycle of melancholy, insofar as the narrative never accepts closure, and, when narcissism is lost, it is unable to solve its own dynamic. Therefore, these narratives start a process that can never be solved, because its solution is rational whereas its beginning is emotional, and there is no convergence between both elements.

As a result, narratives have the elements of a tautological, self referent, dynamic idea that, once in motion, works as its own justification. A monster devouring itself.

“the end, what the fatherland, finally conquered, consists of, is the fight used to conquer it, the name, the memory and the glory of those very battles, of those very deeds that aimed at conquering a chest that, in the end, has something different inside.”²⁰

Because it is so far from reality, the terrorist narrative cannot solve the problems it deals with. For instance, there is a transfer of holiness (terrorists demand an almost religious faith

¹⁹ FREUND, Julián. Sociología del conflicto. (Sociology of Conflict) Work Cited, p. 173.

²⁰ SÁNCHEZ FERLOSIO, Rafael. Sobre la guerra (On War). Published by Ediciones Destino, Barcelona 2007, p. 157.

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in them) but the problem attached to transcendence is not solved. The narratives fighting for independence usually fail because, in the democratic, Western, modern world of today, independence means not so much the liberation of a group as an amputation of a part of its identity. The construction of an identity is not a product obtained against anyone, but a product resulted from a long and complex process of historical evolution, not from a specific conjunction.

The inability to satisfy the desires present in its proposal is critical, especially when violence is used. Polarization and insurrection are necessary, they are wanted to be necessary. Indifference is just impossible, and the division and breaking of the community are almost unavoidable. Paradoxically, the group that fractures is the same group that inspires this phenomenon.

In addition, these narratives are hard to penetrate, they are entrenched, meaning that they only get their information from friendly sources, an egocentric tendency that may end up in autism and can make them lose touch with reality. They hardly accept any information, as valid as it may be, coming from the outside that contradicts their goals and assumptions. In this sense, narratives are autonomous and isolate themselves within certain boundaries that separate them from conventional reality.

They have many types of sources in different levels. For instance, according to Juaristi, in the academic field they form a core made up of a myriad of second-tier intellectuals that support them. Moreover, their acknowledged non-scientific nature (they make stories, not rigorous arguments) makes it harder to criticize them.

That is what Ignatieff, going back to Freud's concepts, calls narcissism of the minor difference: "*the particular property of the narcissist gaze is that it glances up at the Other only to confirm its difference. The narcissist has no interest in others, save for those aspects in which he sees himself reflected.*" Thus, intolerance is nothing but a system of reference.²¹

This narrative seeks the mental control of the group. A huge façade is created, it fills everything and nothing can escape from it. It is based on an irrefutable explanation that

²¹ IGNATIEFF, Michael. The Warrior's Honor. Work Cited, p. 55.

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eliminates reflexive thought and substitutes it for processed, imposed information through a logic that presents everything as natural. This is how the narrative's proposal is imposed; what merely was an ideological group becomes a social movement. That is the danger: its ability to create a collective thinking and to make it a common and desired feature of a social group.

4. THE FIGHT AGAINST VIOLENCE

Violence is an act of provocation meant to denounce a situation and to force a change in roles, which is not very hard given that the logic of these processes is not lineal, but dialectical: a logic of transformation. In 1939 Hitler was a candidate to the Nobel Peace prize, and a relevant magazine named him man of the year.

Following the same logic, the violent presents himself as a peace-loving hero that has no alternative other than violent action. At the same time, the state, now seen merely as a coercive force, is presented as a repressive body. Violence works with effects, the action-reaction spiral or in more advanced ways based on Warden's rings, by effects and derivatives.

As has already been said, it is not power, but a fiction of power. Just as Hannah Arendt said: *"power is superior to violence because, as many instruments as there may be, if the population does not consent, there is no possible domination. Regarding the efficiency of terrorists, it is forgotten that this efficiency is mainly caused by the lack of power of others. The decisive factor is not violence, but the loss of power by the state."*

In addition, democracy has a weakness: its origin is often found in an armed struggle against the previous regime, so there might be a moment of understanding towards those who use violence. There may even exist a desire to promote their views, because democracy, as a system of conflict resolution, always seeks to include everyone, even those that fight it.

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The response of a state governed by the rule of law is always slow and incomplete, and it is seen as incompetent and inefficient. Because the use of force in such a state is residual and reactive, prevention has strong boundaries. Nevertheless, if the state is not in risk, its force and legitimacy are in the long term uncontested. The state can afford to lose in order to win.

From Clausewitz's perspective, the first thing that needs to be done to defeat this enemy is to find out what its gravity center is. Clearly, it is not its military or operative capabilities, for they are scarce. It obviously does not want to destroy, but to provoke, to provoke an ambiguous reaction to question the other party's legitimacy and reinforce its own discourse while weakening the enemy's.

Simultaneously, it expands the framework of the conflict to a space in which forces are diluted and in which distance allows him to loose ties with the deadliest hits. At the same time, that space prevents an explicit vision of the bloodshed, which becomes mere statistics that ignore its terrifying, coercive effect. Even worse, in that space the terrorist ability to subtly impose its truth multiplies.

Fukuyama, for instance, talks about the case of a butcher that hung a sign at his door: "*No dogs or Jews.*" With that sign, he expressed his "*voluntary*" adhesion to the regime, to the dominant narrative, he declared himself a member of the community, he shared its goals and asked his fellow citizens to buy in his shop.

Following that reasoning, the so-called "dirty war" is completely equivocal in a democracy whose legitimacy lies in the consensus of a community that obeys the rules approved by the community itself. It would be different in a dictatorship, whose only source of legitimacy is an efficient use of power, if not force.

Therefore, the failure of the dirty war in a democracy is explained by three reasons. Firstly, dirty war corrupts Clausewitz's famous equation by subordinating politics to tactics, which is terrible. Moreover, this struggle does not solve the problem, because the violent group's gravity center is not the people comprising the group, but the discourse they support through their armed activity. As a result, dirty war, having no real chance of solving the problem, risks its main strength: the legitimacy of the state and the non recognition of the

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violent group as a valid party. Meanwhile, the violent group is bound to the law even though it does not share it. Any other action, different or exceptional, modifies its classification, changes its status and feeds its discourse.

A democracy cannot afford to cross the line in a struggle. According to Clausewitz's dialectic, if it does it will be getting dangerously close to the other party in the struggle, but it will not get anything from it except for internal and foreign discredit of the state, its legitimacy and its discourse, in a context in which, for some people that do not see the blood from the distance, the weak are always the good ones, whatever they have done.

Consequently, the issue is not really about security (although arresting the violent is a step in the right direction, as part of a containment strategy), but about politics. The problem is solved beforehand, and the key is not to win the conflict, but to win the peace. The state governed by the rule of law, social and democratic, is a critical value to be preserved, the cornerstone of a different discourse. It is extremely important to resist the temptations of the dirty war, temptations that are attached to every state governed by the rule of law.

In every conflict, the most decisive factor is will. One is defeated when one accepts defeat, never before. To win is to convince that the victory is fair and about the uselessness of continuing the fight. The question posed is what to do when an enemy that should give up does not. Simple: convince him, win with him. And that is not accomplished exclusively by force, as much as it may help.

The struggle against violence is a struggle between narratives that must be won. After all, terrorism is a bloody narrative. The battlefield is the same as its target: the population.

Consequently, to fight violence at a strategic and political level, there must be a discourse that is not completely foreign to the counterpart's, but that has a specific foundation and that is autonomous, a discourse that always prioritizes the final goal in order to align objectives and actions.

Not having such a discourse means a separation between the tactical, the operational and the political fields, which means that very little can be done. There is no room for reactive

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strategies (a *contradictio in terminis*); all strategies must be part of something bigger that includes operational and political elements.

This discourse does not have, does not need to engage in a conflict. It must be a better discourse, an offer that can assume, wholly or partially, other narratives and that can dilute their demands. Democracy is, in this way, a key to having such a discourse, and it is its job to produce it. At the same time, democracy must rally its own social group so that this group recovers its pride and self-esteem, which may have been affected by the questioning of democracy and by the always apparent inefficiency of the state. Without this there cannot be victory, which is, wholly or partially, a matter of emotions and perceptions.

Hitler used to say that "*political parties may be willing to accept compromise, but never ideological perceptions.*"²² The reason is simple: if an ideology makes concessions, it falls apart, its reasoning breaks up, its desired proposals get delegitimized and it loses connection with reason. The solution, then, is a media pedagogy that forces to take into account whatever the narrative excludes systematically and that shows victims as what they really are, human beings. This makes those who support violence take responsibility for the damage done. The pain goes back to the social space it came from, that is, pain gets "countersocialized." Without a narrative, violence transforms itself into an irrational, hyperbolic phenomenon.

Putting an end to the violence is the first step, but it is necessary to also put an end to the ideological narrative, neutralizing its mobilizing symbols (which create a structural violence), discrediting them so that, in the future, from the distance and the forget, they are never used again to shed blood with a new foundational legitimacy.

It is of paramount importance to repeat history like a mantra, to create an inclusive narrative that knows that the population is both the goal and the target of the struggle. However, human actions do not have a simple answer, and this answer is not always the same: it depends on the society and the moment.

²² GRUNDY, Kenneth W. et all. The Ideologies of Violence., Published by Editorial Tecnos, Madrid 1976, p. 58.

5. VIOLENCE AND PEACE

In the 21st century, the word “peace” is like a totem before which one must almost kneel. However, it has a very vague, empty meaning, it is a blank space that should be filled so the word can have a real meaning. It is a term so widely used that now it does not really mean anything. In fact, it is wrongly used, because by using it violent ideologists get the debate into their imaginary, they make their deaths more relevant, they become a movement and their narrative transforms itself into a conflict.

Moreover, peace has become an object of conflict itself, because whoever gets to associate himself and his political project with the word has already achieved victory. In this regard, Glucksmann said that “*a conqueror is a friend of peace*”²³, because he goes from an active attitude to a reactive one, and, after all, the conqueror only seeks peace because it is the consolidation of his victory.

Loosely quoting Clausewitz, war and peace are instruments of politics between which there is a dialectical contradiction: there is no war without peace, and vice versa. Peace is the political end of all wars, peace being the political situation generated after a conflict. As Glucksmann said, “*the positive sense of war encourages its negative sense: war is waged only because the wager thinks he has the power to end it.*”²⁴ If conflict’s space is the soul, the space of peace is reason; if emotion calls for continuing the fight, reason calls for ending it.

In the conflicts of the 21st century, peace replaced victory, which resulted in war losing its autonomy. When war stops being independent and is at its most abstract level, it becomes complementary, not opposed, to peace, which becomes both the means and the end.

Thus, peace belongs to politics, whereas victory implies the accomplishment of military goals. There is not an exact relation between victory and peace (the Algerian war is a good

²³ GLUCKSMANN, André. *The Discourse of War*. Work Cited, p. 18.

²⁴ IBIDEM, p.37.

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example of this), although the victor always tries to use his victory to make peace, which in turn can make peace a continuation of war by other means.

The word “peace” has the same origins as the word “pact”, and it is a transaction between two fields. The differentiation between victory and peace is essential for the final transit of conflicts. The same thing happens with justice, which, contrary to Kant’s beliefs,²⁵ is subordinated, like truth, to the victor and to politics, as experience proves. There is nothing absolute in human nature, as transactional justice reminds us. This kind of justice is not applied to actions by violent groups in democratic societies, but to massive crimes, and it always acts from the condemnation of the ideologies and the leaders responsible for those crimes.

Man is an integral reality, and there cannot be a separation between means and ends, not even as an intellectual exercise. Death is not reversible, and responsibility is not recoverable. Symbolic violence ends up covering its own symbols with blood. The discourses of both parties cannot be compared, not only because it would be an unacceptable risk, but because it constitutes an unfair, unforgivable loss of legitimacy for one’s own cause and even for democracy as a concept. Justice is the legitimacy of peace, its ideological framework.

A stance is a static concept that cannot be applied to a diverse and dynamic phenomenon. Therefore, what perhaps should be adopted is “*the attitude of no attitude*”. It is a way to respond in a proportionate manner in every case by following, as in a reflex, the axiological principles that have allowed for the doctrinal formation of the West. These principles, like water, adapt to every situation without changing their nature.

To democratically assess the demands of those who exert violence and to respect the given rules, without a response other than what the law, approved by the sovereign people and confirmed by the international community, says. To never reply to a strategy of taunting, to escape the action-reaction logic, may be very hard and painful, but it is the way of preventing terrorists from rising and of making them common criminals. The sky is the limit.

²⁵ “*Fiat iustitia, ruat caelum*”, Let justice be done though the heavens fall.

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Not taking these violent people into account may mean losing, but in the end, it also means victory.

The response also needs a pedagogy based on an integrating discourse that offers both community and justice. At the same time, the response must show the inconsistence of their arguments, their flaws, their lack of real proposals where there are no feasible ideas, the future they are fighting for, the final situation they want, distinguishing facts from narratives and emphasizing what is left out of such narratives.

The struggle is emotional, not rational. Facts are only important because of their influence at the psychological level. The truth is not relevant, emotion is what really matters, although this is only the case for those who use violence.

The Koran says that "*if any one slew a person [...] it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people*". Nothing justifies violence, especially in a democracy, where all opinions can be defended through words. There will always be a future for the peaceful man.

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