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ROLE OF IDEOLOGY IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT (EXTREMISM AND PACIFISM)*

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Abstract. Throughout human history, there has never been a single line of organisation of society. The implementation of different ideas has always been carried out as a project developed because of the real needs of people. Numerous projects have become established and continued to the present day. However, a lot of them degenerated and changed the image of the world in such a way that they became the cause of conflicts. There has also been fragmentation in the implementation of human desire for peace but also desires for rebellion and rejection of inherited cultural or political patterns. We chose pacifism and extremism to compare two forms of the image of the world throughout history. Pacifism is one of the few movements or ideologies which tolerates any national, religious, cultural, or identity-building diversity, and as such, automatically becomes the opposite of extremism, which in its essence either negates or completely denies diversity or plurality. The primary aim of this article is to analyse the mottos of pacifism, to emphasise the universality of its principles as one of the possible defence mechanisms against the spread of aggressive, polarised, and militant tendencies which jeopardise individual societies, and to point out the potential of mutual influence between the constructs so diverse as pacifism and extremism.

Keywords: history of changes; social development; pacifism, extremism; global environment

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1. Introduction

The concept of cooperation in the field of building, shaping, and preserving a lasting peace throughout the globe presupposes the need to maintain cooperation in the most important areas of progress (Wajdi et al., 2023; Bamigboye, 2023). The areas which have been in the long run considered as principal are cooperation in politics, economy, security, protection of the biosphere, or cooperation in the unification of the anthropological aspects of life (such as identity, culture, and ethics). All of these assume a planned research, exchange of knowledge and improvement of education. Emphasis is placed (especially in the long-term perspective) on societal elements, as their essence is the universal ability to serve humankind.

The process of approaching communities contributes to strengthening the ideas which should shape the ability of humanity to survive, as well as strengthen the universality of diplomatic, legal, political and ethical norms. Nevertheless, it is still being determined whether these standards can become permanent, or they change as a result of unexpected events related to changes in the natural or social environment. If they cause changes in international politics, they often also become the reason for various types of global threats (Deneen, 2022). Deneen calls these factors "a disease". They involve, above all, mainly environmental imbalance causing severe consequences for humanity, growing inequality in the distribution of the planet's wealth, the decline of traditional public and state institutions, the loss of trust in the authority of all kinds and its replacement by authoritarianism, as well as other symptoms that contribute to the fragmentation of society (ibid., p. 9-10).

Throughout human history, there have been numerous theories, ideologies, cultural and moral concepts whose investigation has, from the past to this day, been the subject of the formulation of many scientific disciplines (Innset, 2023). For comparison in the presented study, which seeks answers to the problems that have arisen, we have chosen two streams with opposite and contradictory concepts. They are pacifism and extremism. Despite standing at opposite poles of starting points and conclusions, they share some common features. On the one hand, both these ideologies or theories are fusions of several scientific disciplines, diverse opinions and different methodologies. On the other hand, they both have a clearly defined goal - to improve the status of life and society, albeit by various means. In the case of extremism, it is about "improvement" according to the ideas of the extremists themselves, in the sense of claiming the unconditional and exclusive validity of opinions on the functioning of society and the state, using a variety of means - from the legitimate to the violent ones.

Pacifism was formed in ancient times. It has always been related to the preservation of security by the "rule" of peace (*pace*). Its basic idea was to protect all the possible means which would serve this aim, and society would be able to implement them. Such ideas can already be identified in the Pre-Socratic philosophers, in the work of Aristotle, later in St. Augustine, in modern times, especially in the transcendental philosophy of I. Kant, in Catholic philosophy, but also other religions.

The philosophy of Marxism at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries perceived pacifism as a "struggle for peace". However, this oxymoron, partially distorting the essence of pacifism, was not accepted as a cliché. On the contrary, it became a part of numerous paradigms of modern philosophy, not only Marxism, which most often perceived the necessity of change for the better as a "struggle" (of classes, economic-, cultural-, anti-racist, etc.), i.e., as changes in society that can only be brought about by a revolution, often accompanied by violent rhetoric and violent activities. (Dinuš, 2011). The Marxist theory is still alive and triggers strategies of development, which are criticised (Prado, 2023).

As each revolution removes an existing form of power and establishes another, it is in these breakthrough periods that violence and even extremism find their way into the pacifist agenda from ancient times to the present.

Multiple historical events prove that the application of pacifist ideology can, in specific situations, result in resistance, violence and even extremism.

Hence, if every revolution overthrows the existing form of power and establishes a new one, even if to preserve peace and order, it inevitably also involves phenomena referred to as syndromes of evil. The clinical manifestations of this syndrome are cynicism, pessimism, misanthropy and even the humiliation of a person, while manifestations of extremism are also not excluded. The events that are supposed to bring about change (e.g., conflict, local war, national violence) are succeeded by the so-called "construction stage". Nevertheless, this is often followed by the realisation that individual leaders or groups cannot improve the world and establish lasting peace (Bregman, 2020, p. 29-31).

Democracy is an open and pluralistic system, and as such, it allows citizens, groups and nations to cultivate and present ideas which, under certain circumstances, can become radicalised and a security threat.

It can be seen in almost all European countries, where radical and extremist political parties have recently come to the fore, but also extremist activist groups and individuals. They have a destructive impact on the democratic political system and cause increased social instability. Therefore, preserving peace and security is an essential part of modern established democracies. In a global sense, this demonstrates the "necessity" to wage a war against extremism and terrorism carried out by democratic states (in Afghanistan, Iraq, in the states of the former Yugoslavia, but also in the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine, with adverse consequences for the whole of Europe and the wider area) (Zaplatinskij, 2015). At first glance, pacifism perceived in this way - as a certain inciter to resistance - is losing its transformative power. Fortunately, this is not the case. It is only one of the narrow attitudes to this ideology, however significantly harmful.

However, pacifism created numerous documents and declarations of global importance that prevented national and international violence. Its systems of value are still up-to-date, informative, and feasible even in today's world. Therefore, we will focus on both opposing ideologies/theories in the following parts of this study.

The primary goal of this paper is to analyse the ideas of pacifism, which are essential for the present because, as one of the few movements/ideologies, it tolerates any diversity, be it in the national, religious, cultural, or identity-forming sphere. In the context of the above-stated goal, we also want to point out the possibilities of mutual influence between pacifism and extremism and determine the degree of the existing confrontation of pacifist ideas with the ideas of extremism. If societies are built on the principles of modern democracy, why do these extremist movements also appear in these environments? Why are they not part of only those regimes that have yet to resolve structural problems with power, government, and authority? Suppose humanity is to formulate a universal political or civic program of such a type as to act as a barrier against aggressive, militant and society-threatening tendencies appearing even in contemporary established democracies. In that case, the ideas of pacifism and their implementation will be beneficial.

We also adapted adequate methods to the goal set above. In our work, we mainly use analysis/synthesis and comparison. Only analysis can lead us to identify problems, while it is true that we mainly use historical and structural analysis. Comparison has been a proven method since ancient times, and it provides research with unlimited opportunities to determine a specific area and subject of study within the set goal.

In our article, we mainly focused on the following ethical connotations: 1. what particular good does the application of the ideas of pacifism in the politics of the contemporary world bring to society? 2. what specific measures could society accept if radical solutions to unresolved problems are adopted? (currently, they are, for example, the consequences of the ongoing conflict on the European continent). Current domestic and international

politics are threatened by radicalism and especially by extremism related to citizens' dissatisfaction in many world countries. Therefore, it is essential that humanity can transpose the positive aspects of both ideologies. For democratic systems, extremism (if given sufficient attention) is an early warning against a possible threat of authoritarianism. This interpretation has been known to philosophers for two millennia, and current political leaders must try to understand if the present world system should move towards peace and prosperity.

The historical development of human society provides numerous examples of how two opposing ideologies transformed into a less aggressive mutual relationship than at the time of their birth. This is to be credited to the consistent development of science and the acceptance of its results into reality. At the same time, it leads to intermingling the consequences of pacifism and extremism, as elaborated in the text below.

2. Pacifism as a movement – peace and war from the viewpoint of pacifism

The term pacifism (from the Latin *pacificus*: the one who grants/brings peace) is refined and unambiguous from the point of view of the terminological practice of political sciences. Pacifism has no connotations; it is comprehensible and used in *pacifist* and *pacification* forms.

Records show that *pacifism* started to be used as a term in political sciences at the beginning of the 20th century when there were several movements with a robust anti-war character. These movements were on European and American continents since the beginning of Modern Times, i.e., the 16th – 17th centuries. Nevertheless, they were aimed against violence as a social, seen by pacifism as a moral insufficiency of man. The character of these movements was pragmatic because they implemented a new element into the systems of values built previously by religion – condemnation of particular evil (combat, elimination of ethnic groups which hindered violent colonisation, as it was happening in the United States of America but also Russia and the Balkans), using culture. They published books denouncing these negative phenomena, and precisely, this type of literature gained success with readers, comparable with the present-day cult of bestsellers. (Brock, 1972) The situation also helped this cultural and civic support in Europe during this period. After several wars and revolutions, which made the period between the 17th and 19th centuries one of numerous conflicts and violence, especially from the point of conflicts between conservative and liberal understanding of human freedom, state independence and their right to self-determination, they were the first pacifist organisations. The need to prevent violence was also cultivated. The methods of violence were being distinguished as well. Law had already defined the term organised violence, ergo war, which was related to a conflict between groups defined by states, nations and ethnic groups.

Another level of violence referred to the conflict between the groups which defined classes, religions, cultural and social differences, where the violence did not inevitably have the character of "organised" war but was a kind of rebellion or revolt and voiced an extreme effort to change the nature of society. This type of conflict played an essential role in the fact that society started distinguishing between violent responses from, e.g. the government or an authority, and the non-violent reaction based on an ancient Christian tradition.

In the second half of the 19th century a sophisticated system of pacifism built on the traditions mentioned above was formed, the ideals of Enlightenment, and the developing sciences such as social science and international law. They both dealt with reasons for a change in the structure of society and tried to find potential for rectification. Establishing scientific facts was also helped by activists from the lines of erudite citizens. One of them was for example B. von Suttner, the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. (Baxer, 1988)

However, as mentioned in the beginning, the idea of peace as the highest value in society was much older; hence, our analysis has to go back deeper into the past.

We can find records of the Panchsheel Treaty Movement in ancient India, the philosophy of Stoics in Ancient Greece and Rome, but especially in Christianity, which in the dawn of the first century provided strong motivation for various nations because of its central idea of "all people being brothers and sisters". Christianity significantly differed from similar Jewish cultural traditions in the first century, predominantly militant.

Central Europe found a distinguished pacifist authority in the person of J. A. Comenius (1592-1670), whose teachings influenced many Christian emancipation movements, unfortunately, towards a rather militant direction. However, it also affected the views of many philosophers of the Enlightenment period, especially G. W. Leibnitz (1646-1716) and, even more significantly, the Swiss lawyer and diplomat E. de Vattel. These two were the first theorists of political thinking at the beginning of Modern Times who promoted the idea of peaceful solutions to conflicts in both national and international space (Lasicová & Ušiak, 2012). The frequented terms nowadays, such as mediation, negotiation and reconciliation appeared previously in the theoretical works of these personalities.

Additional new elements were imported into the pacifist ideas by early liberals T. Hobbes and J. Locke, because their works were dominated by the themes of the natural right of people to create federative and supranational units which would implement peaceful solutions rather than wars of conquest (ibid., 2012).

There was an idealist idea, a natural result of their philosophy. Suppose people are free to make their own decisions, acting and thinking. In that case, they will not oppose the power represented by the state: Power will be accepted provided its enforcement is following the requirements and needs of citizens. *"Legitimation is guaranteed by the so-called narrative stories, such as the idea of free citizenship, of political and often even social equality, the realisation of the representation principle (...), and it can also be implemented on two levels: the level of universal legitimacy (the whole political system, or the worldwide system), and the level of local legitimacy. The stress is here on some danger of disintegration of popular identity (deliberation), which means that the division of power may split the will of sovereign people because some part of people will legitimise different powers."* (Koper, 2003, p. 26) Reflecting on the philosophical approach to the exploration of power in modern political systems and also in other social phenomena, author J. Koper points out what is also the central theme of our analysis, i.e. that even the legitimate power does not always have necessary instruments to be able to prevent demonstrations of totalitarianism, extremism and radicalism. Ideas of pacifism can still be considered alive because they can exist and be implemented along with diverse forms of power.

However, the best interpretation of pacifism can be seen in connection with the anti-war declarations and agenda that spread in the early 1800s. Peace is the idea upon which pacifism builds any other values and claims. Pacifists of the 18th and 19th centuries wanted permanent or "eternal peace". The principle of this idea is known primarily from the works of I. Kant. (Kant, 1980) Kant built his concept of eternal peace on surprisingly modern principles. Society was supposed to provide for "education to peace" and support economic integration, for which wars have always been unsuitable and adverse. States are equal in the international milieu, and the government (not monarchy) must provide for civil control over the military, including anti-government movements. In case war is inevitable – pacifism analysed various wars - it should only serve as the means for achieving stability and peace. In the work of L. Beaton "The Struggle for Peace", the author says that already the pacifism of 19th century divided wars into psychological, ideological, economic and non-typical, which would nowadays correspond with the term "hybrid war". In the work of L. Beaton "The Struggle for Peace", the author says that already the pacifism of 19th century divided wars into psychological, ideological, economic and non-typical, which would nowadays correspond with the term "hybrid war".

An essential position in the theory of pacifism also has the concept of a just war, which is *sapientes pacis causa bellum garant*, or war which is waged as a decision to achieve peace. The idea of a just war has also been part of history, accompanying humankind from Aristotle to the foundation of the United Nations, which is in part implemented in the UN Charter. At the present, however, the term of a just war has been devalued considerably. It

is still a relevant idea that we are striving for, but its implementation could be improved mainly by effective law enforcement. The reasons are problems mentioned in the introduction above – economic and political crises, new security threats, and the human factor, presently connected with uncontrollable migration. Experts agree that any war is, in a particular manner, unjust because it is the people and civic infrastructure who suffer most in it (Nečas & Ušiak, 2010). No human victims, holocaust, genocide or violence can be excused by the so-called "just demands" of one part of the nation against another one (an ethnic group, religious group, etc.). All modern wars (i.e. the ones in the previous three decades) started as an escalation of unfulfilled national, territorial, civic, political, economic, religious and cultural rights of a particular population group. They were first initiated as radical deeds, extremist actions, to which the state authority, represented by the governing community, responded by use of power.

At present, the difference between a civil (intrastate) and an aggressive war (between two or more countries) is disappearing because, in case of a threat to the international community, the states which are affected by the threat (territorially, ideologically or economically) are obliged to intervene (as an example can be used the war in Ukraine). It is impossible to determine the extent to which these interventions have been intentionally misconstrued. This creates the opportunity to look for reasons for violence, which are also at the origin of extremism. There is also a semantic problem. Extremism is interpreted as a movement, as an ideology, and also as a program. These three levels require different specifications to determine the reasons for the birth of an extremist movement or ideology, the implementation circumstances, and the programs' elimination.

The problem is that a pacifist is a person who refuses to accept social phenomena such as extremism. Hence, they also reject terrorism, militarism, racism, nationalism and fascism. In the 20th century, this refusal was also adopted by socialism, as many countries of the so-called third world landed themselves in the socialist regime mainly due to wars. The ideology of socialism is unacceptable from the pacifists' point of view because they cannot accept the central slogan of the ideology, "fight for peace", as a permanent constituent of social development. During the socialist era, which most Soviet-bloc countries had gone through, this hostility had a fundamentally humane and emotional dimension. The involved countries had in their legislation ordained compulsory military service based on the Military Service Act (Odpovídá linka Československé armády, 1992). Denial of compulsory military service was considered criminal and subject to prosecution. Exceptions were only made for individuals (men) who had health problems. Equally, pacifists had a moral problem with killing someone – if they were part of any active combat worldwide.

This dilemma is also one of the historical traumas of humans. On the one hand, from the times of Ancient Greece to kill was a crime, but killing an enemy was a heroic act. It was accepted in all wars. There was a shift in the 1970s when the course of war and violence because of race, ethnicity or religion became a lucrative topic for any media, especially television. It turned out that many former soldiers could not cope with the post-traumatic shock due to being killed in a war. Man is not disposed to kill unknown people who symbolise "the other side". A modern war does not change anything it refers to; on the contrary, it has even sharpened the population's feeling of guilt. It is actually extremism and terrorism which are mentioned in connotation with these feelings. Not only individuals but society as a whole has lost the sense of limits in the performance of oppression because it has been manipulated by the media, which facilitates the production of violence as a permanent social phenomenon. Society, formed by aggressive social networks through internet "culture", cannot provide adequate upbringing for the younger generation, who also have lost the limits in demanding their requirements and use inadequate means, similar to the ones that extremist groups operate with (Lorenz, 2003).

According to pacifists, the worst characteristic of contemporary society is the loss of control over the manifestations of violence by the present-day state. It has no means to prevent the spread of extremism and the racist propaganda responsible for terrorism (Rogers, 2018).

Pacifists also continue to debate the question as to which form of coexistence for an individual and society is better, whether individualism or holism. Individualism emphasises the human as a free being. There are doubts about the usefulness of individualism because humans are a part of a specific society, social stratum, or more minor or significant group. All these communities, to a certain extent, determine human actions and, at the same time, prospects. They are often in divergence with his/her philosophy.

The holistic concept is a form of cohabitation which indicates the dependence of individuals on society, nevertheless, by adapting the environment to their own image. (This concept originates in Marxism, especially the work of K. Marx *Theses on Feuerbach*, further developed in sociology by T. Parsons and a well-known theorist R. Cox.) However, there is a concept which interconnects both forms of cohabitation. It is a philosophical concept of personalism, promoting the idea that the correlations between the relations of an individual and society are reciprocal and equivalent. As all concepts of pacifism present the world and the outcome of the activity of harmonic forces in society, the individual human has a harmonic status in relation to society. This concept was revitalised in philosophy, ethics, and political sciences in the second half of the 20th century. It is behind the ideas of cooperation, solidarity, multiculturalism and all pan-movements with a humanistic orientation, which alone can gradually eliminate the negative phenomena, such as racism, religious intolerance, neofascism and terrorism. In this part of this discourse, we are dealing with the question of to what extent we can think of pacifism as an ideology.

Every ideology must have some meaningful orientation and must be capable of innovation. The idea of pacifism is extremely important, especially at this point in time. It is active in the virtual agenda against war and conflicts. However, we assume that its everlasting contribution to politics and morals needs to be sufficiently appreciated. We can ask why this relationship has become a kind of cliché in some limiting situations. Why does it only come into the limelight during pre-election campaigns, in medialised cases about scandals, corruption and anomie? It is probably because the political systems are very different from the moral ones. In a political system, morality is a complement to the agenda used for the manipulation of citizens. Morality is a permanent component of most philosophical concepts. In this sense, most ideas connected with pacifism are axiological – peace and stability are the cornerstone upon which security stands, as well as freedom and understanding between nations. The presence of morality is permanent, even though sometimes latent. Politics as a system does not need to be part of morality, it only manifests in it as practice and has a temporary, cyclical objective. Morality does not need propaganda; it needs impulses that man can only provide.

On the contrary, propaganda is essential for politics; all parts of the political agenda need well-proven and focused communication designed to achieve the desirable results. While the axiology of politics is relative, the axiological dimension of morals is permanent. From this point of view, pacifism can be considered a doctrine that, in the future, should have the potential to act as an efficient counterweight against subversive forces and movements in society. If for nothing else, then the reason that extremist, racist and terroristic methods used by some groups in society to reach their goals (beyond most governments' control) can hardly be used as an argument against the benefits of peace, stability and balance in society.

3. Pacifism as an ideology and a program preferring peace and non-violence

The opinions on pacifism as an ideology vary. They are mainly based on generalising the experience of societies that have undergone different developments. In permanently militant and conflicting societies, which we know from the history of European and Asian (or other) continents, pacifism represents an idea which has been helping communities to survive if they have been tossed into long-term conflicts of high and low intensity, caused by racial, ethnic, religious and cultural reasons. Pacifism meant the community's right to resistance without confrontation, to express divergence without incidents, for an alternative solution to the unbearable situation to prevent additional escalation and securitisation of the conflict.

From this point of view, pacifism may appear as a homogenous doctrine, which acts on the scale of brutal violence and its elimination, or at least de-escalation using "peaceful resistance". (Jaroszewski, 1971) Social reality, however, is different. As we have shown above, pacifism is based on peace. European (or Euro-Atlantic) space has connotations of different values, elaborated with time in several scientific disciplines. *Peace* is older than the terminological clarification of nation, state, and international space. Despite that, the significance of peace has always been connected to ending some conflict between human communities, whether the conflict was of external origin or due to some internal mayhem. Peace meant the end of violence, fighting, and destruction, but peace as such had been typologically varied since antiquity. In Ancient Rome, peace as the termination of war was terminologically labelled by the term *pax*, which is etymologically related to the term *pact*. So, it is a contractual construct between the fighting entities which decided to ratify the termination of warfare by an agreement, treaty or any other type of accord on mutual relations. This concept is the basis for a later defined and broader definition of peace, but it is enriched by the questions, such as:

- What kind of peace do we want to establish?
- Who do we want to make peace with?
- Can peace be made forever as an "eternal peace", or is it only possible when it is only established for a limited time?
- What type of violence will be removed by establishing peace?
- Is peace only related to eliminating physical violence and economic disintegration or mental torment of people?

All these questions have been part of paxology (science about peace) since late Middle Ages, but they were reflected also in antiquity, e.g., by Aristotle. However, until the 17th century, they were not part of the normative structure. They first appeared as a draft of a legal concept in the works of Hugo Grotius, a significant figure of international law at the dawn of Modern Times (Coker, 2002).

Several scientific disciplines have been searching for answers to the questions above. According to many theoreticians, pacifism is developing in this permanent effort to answer the questions, not just as a part of the eventual peaceful cohabitation of people but in particular as a political program. Pacifism considers the contractual character of war and peace. Its basic premise is that it is formed as an auxiliary ideological implement of various peace strategies or as an auxiliary ideological implement of a non-conflicting resistance against violent structures of society. This type of pacifism is a political program oriented against direct institutional violence that the state (or any other participant) inflicts through war. The 20th century, particularly its second half, promoted pacifist movements as significant instruments of the public's resistance against war and elevated them to operational programs.

The most famous examples are various pacifistic movements protesting against wars in Korea and Indochina (the 1950s-1960s) and against the Vietnam War (1960s-1970s), which took place as mass movements in Western Europe and the USA. They had a significant cultural and social effect; however, they implicitly affected the political development of Western Europe and the US Howard (Howard, 2000). At the same time, they became a mental program, especially for the younger generation.

A broader connotation of the word peace is also a significant category of values in many other ancient cultures. The Greek expressions *Eirene*, Hebrew *shalom* and Arabic *salaam* express something we call today a Just Peace. It involves exclusion not only of the above-cited institutional violence but also structural violence, which today develops due to cruel treatment within economic exploitation, political oppression and repressions of various types intended to degrade the human as an autonomous being and devastate their identity. The cited manifestations of mainly structural violence are considered to be triggers of extremist movements.

The development of all ancient civilisations was accompanied by manifestations of structural violence, particularly when it was gradually institutionalised. It has always occurred by violent maintenance of specific social forces, i.e. political power. This structural violence survives even to the present day. It is the fundamental reason for armament, revitalisation of military blocs and growing use of cybernetic means of information as an instrument of securitisation. We cited the expressions Eirene, shalom and salaam as civilisational concepts based on Just Peace. These concepts from different cultural environments have the following common features:

1. War cannot be aggressive. (This feature is expressed in the UN Charter as a rule of international law.)
2. War must be the ultimate means of dealing with the situation when any other means fails.
3. War must be finished by a Just Peace so that its termination is not an opportunity or reason for subsequent conflicts.

These requirements are just variations of other more elaborated and sophisticated ones. They are the consequence of the development (of the endeavour) to prevent war as an instrument of dealing with international disputes and preventing the escalation of structural violence. Despite positive efforts which have always existed in these concepts, a Just War is nowadays basically only an ideal towards which humanity may be heading. Still, it is not a predictable solution shortly.

That is why reaching for the ideal of a conflict-free society has become the new agenda of pacifism. It has a strong social character, focused on the elimination of the internal violence of a state, such as:

- Transforming the unjust structures of society related to global militarisation.
- Asserting human rights as the basic requirement of humane security.
- Solving ecological problems, which are accelerators of numerous wars and conflicts.
- Solving ecumenical integration of all people of goodwill, regardless of their race and religion.
- Solving the increasingly considerable social inequality as a result of wars and conflicts.

The new agenda of pacifism also has a robust institutional representation in the third sector, the non-governmental organisations. Nevertheless, the popularity and efficiency of these organisations are now dichotomous – the development of information technologies and the phenomenon of social networks allow controversial propaganda and agitation to groups and individuals, which abuse the idea of pacifism for the promotion of negative attitudes. Opposition against violence, armament, military pacts and military and defensive organisations is not usually in accord with pacifistic ideas; on the contrary, it verges to another extreme, into militant propaganda, into a proclamation of extremist–neofascist, antisemitic and racist attitudes. We assume that political and social sciences are only at the beginning of investigating the listed phenomena.

The concept and meaning of the word peace have at least one additional important dimension. It is in the Far East, East Asia and South Asia concepts, which include an essential term related to our context, the Hindu concept of *satja* and *ahinsa*. *Satja* means inner peace, peace with oneself, peace in one's soul, balance and stability of character, which can do no violence against anything in society. If a man, a social group or a nation do not feel *satja*, outer peace cannot be secured – in our Euro-Atlantic understanding – as peace among nations and countries. *Satja* is the precondition of a collective identity aimed at the equality of people. After this condition is fulfilled (to feel peace with self), a human has the right to require freedoms to which they are entitled. Otherwise, they lose this right. The expression *ahinsa* means harmless, safe for others, and the world of nature. *Ahinsá* expresses the obligation to protect nature, plants and animals, and the protection of our world. Only then will I be granted the right to exploit space and products offered by nature (Sapolski, 2006).

This concept of peace is remarkable because it involves the ecological dimension, which is lacking in Western ideas. Moreover, it is remarkable, thanks to the deconstruction of the terms of law and duty as perceived by our Euro-Atlantic thinking. The sequence is changing – If I fulfil my duties towards myself, other people, nature and

the world, I will be granted the rights I possess; otherwise, I am not eligible for them. The concept is not isolated in the given geographic space. Ahinsa is the fundamental line of Gandhi's non-violent resistance against structural violence. *Contradictio in adjecto – non-violent fight – Satjagraha* of Gandhi is an alternative to pacifism, exceeding the relatively narrow space as it is seen primarily by Europe and the USA. Chaotic reminiscences of the young generation in the West towards the opening of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism became a matter of fashion and social prestige. However, analysing this indoctrination of mainly young people shows even more severe and profound reasons. We believe one is the absence of accepting pacifism's system of values in contrast with the sterility of consuming society with the continuous threat of various conflicts.

4. Extremism – from a movement to an ideology

Suppose we perceive violence as an accepted part of extremism. In that case, the task is to achieve changes in the public and political order of states/societies; it is only possible to allocate time to certain manifestations in a specific period. Violence has been a permanent part of human society. Still, there is an opposing argument regarding this definition – violence can be eliminated if there are instruments to suppress it and prevent it from originating. Violence is a social phenomenon, constantly forming itself as a result of changes in a particular human community and usually having more than just one cause. It is a hybrid phenomenon created as a complex of causes; however, social and cultural reasons for its escalation are indeed present both as social factors and as catalysts with other factors. This social phenomenon also includes, on the one hand, the glorification of elements still existing in social contacts – such as patriotism and nationalism.

On the other hand, if wrong appraisal exists, e.g., by intentional propaganda, these positive elements can transform into a form of violence. In the first instance, it is usually verbal or structural violence, which develops into the institutional form. It is crucial if these forms of violence become part of the internal policy of the intra-political agenda of a country or the agenda of a regular political party. If so, they create the substrate for an ideology and non-democratic components within the democratic society (Rorty, 2007).

J. J. Rousseau wrote in his work *The Social Contract* that people are not inborn enemies. Violence in human society appears because of property and resources. It means that this humane dimension of man must be cultivated on and on. When raised and educated towards humanity, structures are built in the human mind that determines the behaviour in adulthood. When grown and educated towards defending one's egoistic interests, the socialisation of the young generation will also take this direction.

Violence in open form is, in most human communities, considered inhumane. It is displaced by a system of facultative and obligatory rules which are in accord with the cultural identity of a particular society in time and space. If violence is resistant to instruments intended to reduce it, it has transformed into ideology and political games, which are manifestations of extremism. Extremism is thus interpreted as an act of justice, a solution to existing social threats, and a political opposition aimed at participating in the political system of a particular state. If there is violence – specifically extremism – even in verbal form, it triggers a rationalisation of this phenomenon. There are ongoing attempts to explain why this policy is essential. Apologists of extremism point out the unsolved economic, social, medical, national, ethnic and other problems and offer solutions to how they should be dealt with. Extremism is presented as an opinion of a part of society feeling strongly that their requirements are unfulfilled and the goals are false (Danics, 2015).

According to the above-cited author, if violence is rationalised in a particular time and space, it is done by making one particular historical or present event into a fetish. This is happening in such a manner that this event starts to appear as a threat to society unless a particular political subsystem intervenes. This is the road to success in the case of many European political parties with extremist elements in their agendas, either nationalist, chauvinist or any other type. In this respect, it is important to think about the importance of participatory democracy as the type

of democracy which gives the citizen, the individual, a chance to believe that *"... participation is useful and worth sharing because the citizens feel that they are not manipulated by power. (...) they may participate in participation and feel it is rewarding, but they tend to participate actively and consider the decisions taken as obligatory. On the other hand, when there is systematic marginalisation of the position and influence of individuals and their unsatisfactory representation, they tend to believe that their ideas and needs will be only rarely assessed as seriously and taken as equally important as the preferences of the others."* (Kováčik, 2009, p. 150) This example points out that even the humanistic type of democracy – the participation democracy (Sekerák, 2017) – is not immune against the feelings of injustice as the cause of extremist movements and the subsequent ideological “management” of the problem.

In the history of European countries, many events first originated from social and cultural impulses as positive movements and later escalated into serious conflicts. Religious wars document them at the beginning of Modern Times, class conflicts during the bourgeois revolutions, and national conflicts, especially in the 19th century when national states were formed either due to the disintegration of empires or, on the contrary, by the unification of small states.

The most atrocious conflict involving an extremist ideology was the period of Fascism/Nazism. For sociologists, but also other social sciences, this remains a period of great importance for the research, where the following questions should be reflected again:

1. Why did Europe allow the holocaust?
2. Why are genocide and the function of concentration camps questioned nowadays?
3. Is historical memory fading? Or is indifference towards the past part of the new European identity?

From the point of view of sociology, people are not divided between the good and the bad. People become bad when communication breaks down or falls victim to stereotypes aimed at propaganda as an instrument used by the media, particularly social networks. The possible fault is also a remaining historical cliché, which was formed in the mid-1800s during bourgeois (national) revolutions. In this regard, we must question whether these clichés are still valid. A nation is a united, sovereign unit with the right to self-determination. If it gets this opportunity, the eccentric forces of ethnic groups and nationalities (differing in culture and religion) will cease to act, and the nation will function with a single national interest. This customary opinion is contradicted by the situation in the Balkans from the 1990s until 2017. A nation can only develop in the geographic region where it was formed. This does not apply to enclaves (The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan for the sake of Nagorno-Karabakh can be used as an example. However, this thesis is also refuted in the Slovak Vojvodina in Serbia) (Šimoňák, 2008).

The need for an acceptable reinterpretation of these historical clichés is a real challenge for political and social sciences. This is one of the possibilities to comprehend the reasons for the formation of extremism in the past and now, and at the same time, to define extremism properly, which would help to deter the risks of extremism in the decisive sphere of administration.

In modern society, defining the limits of what is tolerable and what is a real threat to society is essential. The difference in setting boundaries in specific countries shows the persistence of democratic ideas. However, there are generally only two ways to prevent the dangerous growth and spread of the threats connected to violence (extremism):

1. When their existence is in a state which is endangered (e.g., authoritarianism) but has the capability of creating the adequate means to remove them, or,
2. If they result from communication failure in international relations, it is imperative to revitalise this communication, using influential ideology with prominent positive characteristics.

The first method is related to the particular state's constitution, and to the civilian control over its observance. In 1787, when the Constitutional Convention, headed by the future president George Washington, met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the proceedings included several necessary structural measures which the Founding Fathers approved as a protection against the eventual formation of a powerful central government. It was civilian control (Constitution of the USA, Art. II. par. 2) which granted the president a double role – to be the Commander in Chief of the military, but granted him at the same time the position and the right to be in charge of civilian control over military policy. The constitution assured that the legislature could also be responsible for the right of a militia to intervene, if necessary, to protect lawfulness in the Union (Krejčí, 2009). This control method is inherent in the constitutions of all modern democratic states. Its weak point, however, is actually in the problematic assessment of the limit between radicalism and extremism, primarily if the supporters of radicalism (operating within the limits set by the constitution and laws) group in political parties, operating regularly by the authority of the results of democratic elections. This situation is not just an issue of one state; it has trans-European vitality and recurs with various intensities periodically. According to G. Friedman, this internal political tension will have a relatively permanent than periodical character and rather global than regional dimension. The second half of the 21st century will become when the opposition will try to accomplish a technologically controlled overturn. The United States of America will become an enemy of traditionalists worldwide, as they will produce many of the most controversial technologies, and the model of their inner social confusion will become the norm (Friedman, 2009).

The second approach to dealing with the growing radicalism and extremism is more complex. It relates to the solid philosophical context evident in Europe from antiquity through the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Modern Times up to the present. We are referring to the idea and thereon built ideology of pacifism, which, despite its modern present forms (e.g. Non-Aligned Movement as well as other peace concepts), formulates and rationalises the much earlier ideas which, despite modifications and deformations, have been widespread throughout the history when the specific European values were being formed.

Similarly, the defence against the growing radicalism and extremism in democracy manifests itself in two ways: on the one hand, the practical idea of the power of the citizen (through the constitution and laws) is postulated so that society is not dominated by hostile and uncontrollable forces (Ivančík & Nečas, 2023). Similarly, defence against the growing radicalism and extremism takes shape towards two initiations: on the one hand, it is the practical idea of the power of citizens (through constitutions and law) being postulated to prevent harmful and uncontrollable forces from taking control over society. On the other hand, the humane message is being proposed to answer the elementary question of whether it is pacifism or a conflicting militantism that corresponds to human nature in society, even though wars have always been part of human civilisation.

Throughout the development of European thinking and culture, upon which democracy is built, both methods of defence against radicalism and extremism have been tested, and the idea of pacifism seems to be of permanent importance. It is the foundation on which international law is built, not only the European Union (EU) system of laws but also the constitutions of democratic countries “*which must avoid being threatened with power, and also using power*” (Charter of the United Nations). Nevertheless, just recently, in close vicinity of the EU, these laws have been repeatedly violated in the conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

5. Summary

Both Pacifism and Extremism are ideologies, movements, or programs (depending on the point of view) which have been part of evolution in the development of society. They occurred with varying intensity. With some level of simplification, the importance of pacifism has been growing with the increasing intensity and cruelty of modern wars. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, they are referring to the legacy of A. Nobel is an agenda of great social significance still relevant because its extent and depth keep growing.

Extremism is partly a consequence of modern liberal ideas because it does not deny people the right to protest against politics (government, political party) if they disagree. However, it is crucial that the state power can guard the intensity of the protest and has the means to eliminate the escalation of demonstrations into uncontrollable violence.

It is important to emphasise that pacifism is a significant concept, mainly because the history of European thought lacks sufficiently elaborate reasons and results of structural violence, inner peace, the responsibility of an individual (and also organisations) for protection, and of the creative role of non-violence in human history. The concept of pacifism is open, which makes it very similar to the ideas of freedom and justice. No country, nation or culture can proclaim their concept or doctrine as the best. All those mentioned above and many other related humane concepts are a product of the thoughts and activities of human society. It is the heritage of the past and a project for the future, which can also be used as a device against structural violence, which nowadays employs most of all extremism.

T. Zálešák quotes an interesting modern metaphor, already pointed out by Confucius (Zálešák, 2022), that what was on the edges of the political spectrum in the past is now being pushed into its centre, making yesterday's extreme part of the mainstream in the domestic and international politics. The history of the development of human society proves that all accepted rules, requirements, canons and laws are based on basic human needs - preservation of life, protection of family and property, but also on freedom and independence, whether it is moral, political, religious, cultural and economic freedom. A person evaluates themselves according to the constructs in which they were born, grew up and applied themselves as a member of society. However, all these self-evaluations depend on how society deals with political power, morality, the level of privacy protection, and the possibilities of freedom.

Well-known are the libertarian theses that a selfish action of an individual may not necessarily be harmful to society. On the contrary, it can cause a sense of order and compliance with rules, provided others do not follow these rules, especially people and institutions that should help solve social problems. That is why we will use Confucius's quote, which does not correspond precisely to the original but makes sense: "When words lose their meaning, the people lose their freedom." (ibid., p.56) Nevertheless, it can also be reversed if the words (expressions, laws) are not created concerning the demands of freedom and ethics; the word *people* as the foundation of society will lose its meaning. People will find themselves in shackles and start looking for a solution. Mostly extreme if there is no other way. In the sense of ancient philosophy, extremes (even if antiquity did not know this term) are the opposite of virtue or prowess, i.e., the ability of a person not to succumb to "evil forces" but to face them as a balanced individual, not by violence but by moral action.

The question remains whether the two extreme positions that we defined at the beginning of the text - pacifism and extremism - have the ability of a mutual solution through ethics and concrete morality. We assume this should be the goal of the modern politics of democratic states.

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