

TOWARD PERPETUAL PEACE

public rights of human beings and so for perpetual peace; only under this condition can we flatter ourselves that we are constantly approaching perpetual peace.

First supplement

On the guarantee of perpetual peace

What affords this *guarantee* (surety) is nothing less than the great artist nature (*natura daedala rerum*)⁴ from whose mechanical course purposiveness shines forth visibly, letting concord arise by means of the discord between human beings even against their will; and for this reason nature, regarded as necessitation by a cause the laws of whose operation are unknown to us, is called *fate*, but if we consider its purposiveness in the course of the world as the profound wisdom of a higher cause directed to the objective final end of the human race and predetermining this course of the world, it is called *providence*,* which

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* In the mechanism of nature, to which the human being (as a sensible being) belongs, there is evident a form lying at the basis of its existence, which we can make comprehensible to ourselves only if we ascribe it to the end of a creator of the world determining it in advance; we call its determination in advance (divine) *providence* in general; insofar as it is put in the *beginning* of the world, we call it *founding* providence (*providentia conditrix; semel iussit, semper parent* – Augustine);⁷ but as put in the *course* of nature, to maintain this in accord with universal laws of purposiveness, we call it *ruling* providence (*providentia gubernatrix*); as [directing nature] further to particular ends not to be foreseen by the human being but only conjectured from the outcome, we call it *guiding* providence (*providentia directrix*); and finally, with respect to single events as divine ends, we no longer call it providence but *dispensation* (*directio extraordinaria*), although (since this in fact alludes to miracles, though the events are not called such), it is a foolish presumption for the human being to want to cognize an event as a dispensation; for it is absurd to conclude from a single event to a particular principle of the efficient cause (to conclude that this event is an end and not merely an indirect result, by a natural mechanism, of another end quite unknown to us), and it is full of self-conceit, however pious and humble such talk may sound. So too the division of providence (regarded *materialiter*), as directed to *objects* in the world, into *general* and *special* providence is false and self-contradictory (that, e.g., it is indeed concerned to preserve species of creatures but leaves individuals to chance); for it is called general in its purpose just because no single thing is thought to be excepted from it. Presumably, what was meant here is the division of providence (regarded *formaliter*) in terms of the way its purpose is carried out, namely into *ordinary* providence (e.g., the annual death and revival of nature with the changes of seasons) and *extraordinary* providence (e.g., the transporting of wood by ocean currents to Arctic coasts where it cannot grow, thus providing for the native inhabitants, who could not live without it); in the latter case, although we can very well explain to ourselves the physico-mechanical cause of these appearances (e.g., by the wooded river banks in temperate countries, where trees fall into the rivers and are carried farther afield by currents such as the Gulf Stream), we must still not overlook the teleological cause as well, which intimates the foresight of a wisdom in command of nature. But as for the concept, current in the schools, of a divine *intervention* or collaboration

⁴ Nature the contriver of things. Lucretius *De rerum natura* 5.234.

⁷ Providence the founder; once it has ordered, they always obey.

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we do not, strictly speaking, *cognize* in these artifices of nature or even so much as *infer* from them but instead (as in all relations of the form of things to ends in general) only can and must *add it in thought*, in order to make for ourselves a concept of their possibility by analogy with actions of human art; but the representation of their relation to and harmony with the end that reason prescribes immediately to us (the moral end) is an idea, which is indeed transcendent for *theoretical* purposes but for practical purposes (e.g., with respect to the concept of the duty of *perpetual peace* and putting that mechanism of nature to use for it) is dogmatic and well founded as to its reality. Moreover, the use of the word *nature* when, as here, we have to do only with theory (not with religion) is more befitting the limitations of human reason (which must confine itself within the limits of possible experience with respect to the relation of effects to their causes) and more *modest* than is the expression of a *providence* cognizable for us, with which one presumptuously puts on the wings of Icarus in order to approach more closely the secret of its inscrutable purpose.

8:363 Now, before we determine more closely this affording of the guarantee, it will be necessary first to examine the condition⁴ that nature has prepared for the persons acting on its great stage, which finally makes its assurance of peace necessary; only then shall we examine the way it affords this guarantee.

Its preparatory arrangement consists in the following: that it 1) has taken care that people should be able to live in all regions of the earth; 2) by *war* it has driven them everywhere, even into the most inhospitable

8:362 (*concurus*) toward an effect in the sensible world, this must be given up. For to want to pair what is disparate (*gryphes iungere equis*)⁵ and to let what is itself the complete cause of alterations in the world *supplement* its own predetermining providence (which must therefore have been inadequate) during the course of the world is, *first*, self-contradictory. For example, to say that, *next to God*, the physician cured the illness, and was thus his assistant in it, is *in the first place* self-contradictory. For *causa solitaria non iuvat*.⁶ God is the author of the physician together with all his medicines and so the effect must be ascribed *entirely* to him, if one wants to ascend all the way to that highest original ground, theoretically incomprehensible to us. Or one can also ascribe it *entirely* to the physician, insofar as we follow up this event as belonging to the order of nature and as explicable in terms of the order of nature, within the chain of causes in the world. *Second*, such a way of thinking also does away with all determinate principles for appraising an effect. But from a *morally practical* point of view (which is thus directed entirely to the supersensible), as, e.g., in the belief that God, by means incomprehensible to us, will make up for the lack of our own righteousness if only our disposition is genuine, so that we should never slacken in our striving toward the good, the concept of a divine *concurus* is quite appropriate and even necessary; but it is self-evident that no one must attempt to *explain* a good action (as an event in the world) by this *concurus*, which is a futile theoretical cognition of the supersensible and is therefore absurd.

⁵ To couple griffins with horses. Virgil *Eclogues* 8.27.

⁶ a single cause does not assist

⁴ *Zustand*

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regions, in order to populate these; 3) by war it has compelled them to enter into more or less lawful relations. That moss grows even in the cold wastes around the Arctic Ocean, which the *reindeer* can scrape from under the snow in order to be the nourishment, or also the draft animal, for the Ostiaks or Samoyeds; or that the sandy wastes contain salt for the *camel*, which seems as if created for traveling in them, so as not to leave them unused, is already wonderful. But the end shines forth even more clearly when we see that on the shore of the Arctic Ocean there are, besides furbearing animals, also seals, walrus, and whales, whose flesh gives the inhabitants food and whose blubber gives them warmth. But nature's foresight arouses most wonder by the driftwood it brings to these barren regions (without anyone knowing exactly where it comes from), without which material they could make neither their boats and weapons nor their huts to live in; there they have enough to do warring against animals, so that they live peaceably among themselves. What *drove* them *into* those regions, however, was presumably nothing other than war. But the first *instrument of war*, among all the animals the human being learned to tame and domesticate at the time the earth was being populated, was the *horse* (for the elephant belongs to a later time, namely the time of the luxury of already established states); so too, the art of cultivating certain kinds of grasses, called *grain*, whose original characteristics we can no longer cognize, and of diversifying and improving certain *types of fruits* by transplanting and grafting (perhaps in Europe only two species, the crab apple and the wild pear), could arise only in the condition of already established states, where there was secured ownership of land, after human beings, previously in the lawless freedom of *hunting*,* fishing, or pastoral life, had been driven to *agricultural* life; then *salt* and *iron* were discovered, perhaps the first articles, everywhere in demand, of a trade among various peoples, by which they were first brought into a *peaceable relation* to each other and so into understanding, community, and peaceable relations with one another, even with the most distant.

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In taking care that people *could* live everywhere on the earth, nature at the same time despotically willed that they *should* live everywhere, even if against their inclination, and without this "should" even presupposing a concept of duty that would bind them to do so by means of a moral law;

* Of all ways of life, that of the *hunter* is undoubtedly most opposed to a civilized constitution; for families, having to separate, soon become strangers to one another and subsequently, being dispersed in extensive forests, also *hostile* since each needs a great deal of space for acquiring its food and clothing. The *prohibition of blood addressed to Noah* (Genesis 9:4–6) – which, often reiterated, was a condition later imposed by Jewish Christians upon the newly accepted Christians of heathen origin, though in a different connection (Acts 15, 20 and 21, 25) – seems to have been originally nothing other than a prohibition of the *hunter's way of life*; for in its cases must often come up in which raw flesh is eaten, and if the latter is forbidden so too is the former.

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8:365 instead it chose war to achieve this end it has. That is to say, we see peoples whose unity of language enables us to recognize the unity of their descent, such as the Samoyeds on the Arctic Ocean on the one hand and on the other a people of similar language two hundred [German] miles distant in the Altaian Mountains, between whom another, namely a Mongolian people given to horsemanship and hence to war, has thrust itself and so driven the former part of the tribe far away from the latter, into the most inhospitable Arctic regions, where they would certainly not have spread of their own inclination;* in the same way the Finns in the northernmost regions of Europe, called Lapps, are now just as far separated from the Hungarians, to whom they are related in language, by Gothic and Samartian peoples who thrust themselves in between them; and what can have driven the Eskimos (a race quite distinct from all American races and perhaps descended from European adventurers of ancient times) into the north of America, and the Pesherae into the south all the way to Tierra del Fuego, if not war, which nature makes use of as a means to populate the earth everywhere. War itself, however, needs no special motive but seems to be engrafted onto human nature and even to hold as something noble, to which the human being is impelled by the drive to honor without self-seeking incentives, so that *military courage* is judged (by the American savages as well as by the European savages in the age of chivalry) to be of immediately great worth, not only *if* there is war (as would be reasonable) but also in order that *there may be war*, and war is often begun merely in order to display courage; hence an inner *dignity* is put in war itself, and even philosophers have eulogized it as a certain ennoblement of humanity, unmindful of the saying of a certain Greek, "War is bad in that it makes more evil people than it takes away." So much for what nature does *for its own end* with respect to the human race as a class of animals.

Now we come to the question concerning what is essential to the purpose of perpetual peace: what nature does for this purpose with reference to the end that the human being's own reason makes a duty for him, hence to the favoring of his *moral purpose*, and how it affords the guarantee that what man *ought* to do in accordance with laws of freedom but does not do, it is assured he *will* do, without prejudice to this freedom, even by a constraint of nature, and this in terms of all three relations of public right: the *right of a state*, the *right of nations* and *cosmopolitan right*. When I say of

* The question could be raised: if nature willed that these frozen shores not remain uninhabited, what will become of their inhabitants if (as we may expect) it some day ceases to bring them driftwood? For we may believe that, as culture progresses, the occupants of the temperate zones will make better use of the wood growing on the banks of their rivers than to let it fall into them and be swept out to sea. I reply: those who live on the Ob, the Yenisi, the Lena, and so forth will bring it to them by trade and will barter it for the animal products so abundant in the sea around the Arctic coasts, once it (nature) has first exacted peace among them.

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nature, it *wills* that this or that happen, this does not mean, it lays upon us a *duty* to do it (for only practical reason, without coercion, can do that) but rather that nature itself *does* it, whether we will it or not (*fata volentem ducunt, nolentem trahunt*).^v

1. Even if a people were not forced by internal discord to submit to the constraint of public laws, war would still force them from without to do so, inasmuch as by the natural arrangement discussed above each people would find itself in the neighborhood of another people pressing upon it, against which it must form itself internally into a *state* in order to be armed as a *power* against it. Now the *republican* constitution is the only one that is completely compatible with the right of human beings, but it is also the most difficult one to establish and even more to maintain, so much so that many assert it would have to be a state of *angels* because human beings, with their self-seeking inclinations, would not be capable of such a sublime form of constitution. But now nature comes to the aid of the general will grounded in reason, revered but impotent in practice, and does so precisely through those self-seeking inclinations, so that it is a matter only of a good organization of a state (which is certainly within the capacity of human beings), of arranging those forces of nature in opposition to one another in such a way that one checks the destructive effect of the other or cancels it, so that the result for reason turns out as if neither of them existed at all and the human being is constrained to become a good citizen even if not a morally good human being. The problem of establishing a state, no matter how hard it may sound, is *soluble* even for a nation of devils (if only they have understanding) and goes like this: "Given a multitude of rational beings all of whom need universal laws for their preservation but each of whom is inclined covertly to exempt himself from them, so to order this multitude and establish their constitution that, although in their private dispositions they strive against one another, these yet so check one another that in their public conduct the result is the same as if they had no such evil dispositions." Such a problem must be soluble. For the problem is not the moral improvement of human beings but only the mechanism of nature, and what the task requires one to know is how this can be put to use in human beings in order so to arrange the conflict of their unpeaceable dispositions within a people that they themselves have to constrain one another to submit to coercive law and so bring about a condition of peace in which laws have force. It can be seen even in actually existing states, still very imperfectly organized, that they are already closely approaching in external conduct what the idea of right prescribes, though the cause of this is surely not inner morality^w (for it is not the case that a good state constitution is to be expected from inner

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^v The Fates lead the willing, drive the unwilling. Seneca *Epist. mor.* 18.4.

^w *das Innere der Moralität*

8:367 morality; on the contrary, the good moral education^x of a people is to be expected from a good state constitution), and thus that reason can use the mechanism of nature, through self-seeking inclinations that naturally counteract one another externally as well, as a means to make room for its own end, the rule of right,^y and in so doing also to promote and secure peace within as well as without, so far as a state itself can do so. Here it is therefore said that nature *wills* irresistibly that right should eventually gain supremacy. What we here neglect to do eventually comes about of its own accord, though with great inconvenience. "If one bends the reed too hard it breaks; and he who wills too much wills nothing." Bouterwek.⁷

2. The idea of the right of nations presupposes the *separation* of many neighboring states independent of one another; and though such a condition is of itself a condition of war (unless a federative union of them prevents the outbreak of hostilities), this is nevertheless better, in accordance with the idea of reason, than the fusion of them by one power overgrowing the rest and passing into a universal monarchy, since as the range of government expands laws progressively lose their vigor, and a soulless despotism, after it has destroyed the seed of good, finally deteriorates into anarchy. Yet the craving of every state (or of its head) is to attain a lasting condition of peace in this way, by ruling the whole world where possible. But *nature wills* it otherwise. It makes use of two means to prevent peoples from intermingling and to separate them: differences of *language* and of *religion*,* which do bring with them the propensity to mutual hatred and pretexts for war but yet, with increasing culture and the gradual approach of human beings to greater agreement in principles, leads to understanding in a peace that is produced and secured, not as in such a despotism (in the graveyard of freedom), by means of a weakening of all forces, but by means of their equilibrium in liveliest competition.

8:368 Just as nature wisely separates states that the will of each state, and even on grounds of the right of nations, would like to unite under itself by cunning or force, so on the other hand it also unites nations that the concept of cosmopolitan right would not have secured against violence and war, and does so by means of their mutual self-interest. It is the *spirit of commerce*, which cannot coexist with war and which sooner or later takes

* *Different religions*: an odd expression! just as if one could also speak of different *morals*. There can indeed be historically different *creeds*,^z [to be found] not in religion but in the history of means used to promote it, which is the province of scholarship, and just as many different *religious books* (the Zendavesta, the Vedas, the Koran, and so forth), but there can be only one single *religion* holding for all human beings and in all times. Those can therefore contain nothing more than the vehicle of religion, what is contingent and can differ according to differences of time and place.

^x *Bildung*

^y *der rechtlichen Vorschrift*

^z *Glaubensarten*

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hold of every nation. In other words, since the *power of money* may well be the most reliable of all the powers (means) subordinate to that of a state, states find themselves compelled (admittedly not through incentives of morality) to promote honorable peace and, whenever war threatens to break out anywhere in the world, to prevent it by mediation, just as if they were in a permanent league for this purpose; for, by the nature of things, great alliances for war can only rarely be formed and even more rarely succeed. In this way nature guarantees perpetual peace through the mechanism of human inclinations itself, with an assurance that is admittedly not adequate for *predicting* its future (theoretically) but that is still enough for practical purposes and makes it a duty to work toward this (not merely chimerical) end.

Second supplement Secret article for perpetual peace

A secret article in negotiations of public right is *objectively*, that is, considered in terms of its content, a contradiction; but *subjectively*, appraised in terms of the quality of the person who dictates it, a secret can well be present in them, inasmuch as a person finds it prejudicial to his dignity to announce publicly that he is its author.

The sole article of this kind is contained in the following proposition: *The maxims of philosophers about the conditions^a under which public peace is possible shall be consulted by states armed for war.*

But it seems to be humiliating for the legislative authority of a state, to which one must naturally ascribe the greatest wisdom, to seek from its *subjects* (philosophers) instructions about the principles of its conduct toward other states, and yet very advisable to do so. A state will therefore *invite their instruction tacitly* (thus making a secret of it), and this is tantamount to saying that it will *allow them to speak* freely and publicly about universal maxims of waging war and establishing peace (for that they will do of their own accord, if only they are not forbidden to do so); and the agreement of states with one another on this point requires no special arrangement of states among themselves for this purpose but is already present in obligation by universal (morally legislative) human reason. This does not mean, however, that a state must give the principles of philosophers precedence over the findings of lawyers (representatives of the power of the state), but only that they be given a *hearing*. A lawyer who has made his symbol the *scales* of right along with the *sword* of justice does not usually make use of the latter merely to keep all extraneous influences

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^a *Bedingungen*

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away from the former, but when one side of the scales refuses to sink he puts the sword into it (*vae victis*);^b and a lawyer who is not also a philosopher (at least in morality) is greatly tempted to do so, since his office is only to apply existing laws but not to investigate whether such laws themselves need to be improved, and he counts this rank of his faculty, which is in fact lower, as higher because it is accompanied by power (as is also the case with the other two faculties).⁸ Beneath this allied power the philosophical faculty stands on its very low step. So it is said of philosophy, for example, that she is the *handmaiden* of theology (and likewise of the other two faculties). But it is not clear whether “she bears the torch before her mistress or carries the train behind.”

That kings should philosophize or philosophers become kings is not to be expected, but it is also not to be wished for, since possession of power unavoidably corrupts the free judgment of reason. But that kings or royal peoples (ruling themselves by laws of equality) should not let the class of philosophers disappear or be silent but should let it speak publicly is indispensable to both, so that light may be thrown on their business; and, because this class is by its nature incapable of forming seditious factions or clubs, it cannot be suspected of spreading *propaganda*.

Appendix

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I. ON THE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN MORALS AND POLITICS WITH A VIEW TO PERPETUAL PEACE

Morals is of itself practical in the objective sense, as the sum of laws commanding unconditionally, in accordance with which we *ought* to act, and it is patently absurd, having granted this concept of duty its authority, to want to say that one nevertheless *cannot* do it. For in that case this concept would of itself drop out of morals (*ultra posse nemo obligatur*);^c hence there can be no conflict of politics, as doctrine of right put into practice, with morals, as theoretical doctrine of right (hence no conflict of practice with theory); for if there were, one would have to understand by the latter a general *doctrine of prudence*, that is, a theory of maxims for choosing the most suitable means to one's purposes aimed at advantage, that is, to deny that there is a [doctrine of] morals at all.

Politics says, “*Be ye wise as serpents*”; morals adds (as a limiting condition) “*and guileless as doves*.”^d If both cannot coexist in one command, there

^b woe to the vanquished

^c no one is obligated beyond what he can do

^d Matthew 10:16

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is really a conflict of politics with morals; but if both ought nevertheless to be thoroughly united, then the concept of opposition is absurd, and the question of how that conflict is to be resolved cannot even be posed as a problem. Although the proposition *honesty is the best politics* contains a theory that is, unfortunately, very often contradicted by practice, the equally theoretical proposition *honesty is better than all politics* is raised infinitely above all objections and is indeed the indispensable condition of all politics. The tutelary god⁶ of morals does not yield to Jupiter (the god of power); for Jupiter is still subject to fate, that is, reason is not sufficiently enlightened to survey the series of predetermining causes that would allow it to predict confidently the happy or unhappy results of human actions in accordance with the mechanism of nature (though it is sufficiently enlightened to hope they will be in conformity with its wish). But it throws enough light everywhere for us to see what we have to do in order to remain on the path of duty (in accordance with rules of wisdom), and thereby do toward the final end.

But now the practical man (for whom morals is mere theory), bases his despairing denial of our benign hope (even while granting *ought* and *can*) strictly on this: that he pretends to see in advance, from the nature of the human being, that *he is never going to will* what is required in order to realize that end leading toward perpetual peace. Admittedly, the volitions of *all individuals* to live in a lawful constitution in accordance with principles of freedom (the *distributive* unity of the will *of all*) is not adequate to this end; but there is still required for it this solution of a difficult problem, that *all together* will this condition (the *collective* unity of the united will), so that a whole of civil society comes to be; and since, accordingly, a uniting cause must be added to this variety of the particular volitions of all, in order to produce from them a common will, which no one of the all is capable of, in the *carrying out* of that idea (in practice) the only beginning of the rightful condition to be counted upon is that by *power*, on the coercion of which public right is afterward based; and (since we can scarcely allow for a moral disposition of the legislator such that, after the disorderly multitude has been united into a people, he will now leave the people to bring about a rightful constitution by its common will) it can be anticipated that in actual experience there will be great deviations from that idea (of theory).

It is then said that he who once has power in his hands will not let the people prescribe laws for him. A state that is once in possession [of the power] not to be subject to any external laws will not make itself dependent upon the tribunal of other states with respect to the way it is to pursue its right against them; and even a continent, if it feels itself superior to another that does not otherwise stand in its way, will not leave unused the means of strengthening its power by plundering or even conquering it; and so all the plans of theory for the right of a state, the right of

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⁶ *Grenzgott*

nations, and cosmopolitan right dissolve into ineffectual, impracticable ideals, whereas a practice that is based on empirical principles of human nature, one that does not consider it demeaning to draw instruction for its maxims from the way of the world, can alone hope to find a sure ground for its edifice of political prudence.

8:372 Admittedly, if there were no freedom and no moral law based upon it and everything that happens or can happen is instead the mere mechanism of nature, then politics (as the art of making use of this mechanism for governing human beings) would be the whole of practical wisdom, and the concept of right would be an empty thought. But if one finds it indispensably necessary to join the concept of right with politics, and even to raise it to the limiting condition of politics, it must be granted that the two can be united. I can indeed think of a *moral politician*, that is, one who takes the principles of political prudence in such a way that they can coexist with morals, but not of a *political moralist*, who frames a morals to suit the statesman's advantage.

A moral politician will make it his principle that, once defects that could not have been prevented are found within the constitution of a state or in the relations of states, it is a duty, especially for heads of state, to be concerned about how they can be improved as soon as possible and brought into conformity with natural right, which stands before us as a model in the idea of reason, even at the cost of sacrifices to their self-seeking [inclinations]. Since the severing of a bond of civil or cosmopolitan union even before a better constitution is ready to take its place is contrary to all political prudence, which agrees with morals in this, it would indeed be absurd to require that those defects be altered at once and violently; but it can be required of the one in power that he at least take to heart the maxim that such an alteration is necessary, in order to keep constantly approaching the end (of the best constitution in accordance with laws of right). A state can already *govern* itself in a republican way even though, by its present constitution, it possesses a despotic *ruling power*,^f until the people gradually becomes susceptible to the influence of the mere idea of the authority of law (just as if it possessed physical power) and thus is found fit to legislate for itself (such legislation being originally based on right). Even if a constitution more in conformity with law were attained illegitimately, by the violence of a *revolution* engendered by a bad constitution, it could then not be held permissible to lead the people back to the old one, although during the revolution anyone who took part in it by violence or intrigue would be subject with right to the punishment of rebels. But as regards the external relations of states, it cannot be demanded of a state that it give up its constitution even though this is a despotic one (which is, for all that, the stronger kind in relation to

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^f *Herrschermacht*

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external enemies), so long as it runs the risk of being at once devoured by other states; hence, as for that resolution, it must also be permitted to postpone putting it into effect until a more favorable time.*

Thus it may always be that despotizing^g moralists (erring in practice) offend in various ways against political prudence (by measures prematurely adopted or recommended); yet when they offend against nature experience must gradually bring them onto a better course; but moralizing politicians, by glossing over political principles contrary to right on the pretext that human nature is not *capable* of what is good in accord with that idea, as reason prescribes it, *make* improvement *impossible* and perpetuate, as far as they can, violations of right.

Instead of the practice^h of which these politically prudent men boast, they deal in *machinations*,ⁱ inasmuch as their only concern is to go along with the power now ruling (so as not to neglect their private advantage), and thereby to hand over the people and where possible the whole world, in the way of true lawyers (of the craft, not of *legislation*) when they go into politics. For since it is not their business to reason subtly about legislation itself but to carry out the present commands of the law of the land, to them whatever lawful constitution now exists must always be the best and, when this is altered from on high, the one following it, since everything is then in its proper mechanical order. But if this skill in turning their hand to everything gives them the illusion that they are also able to judge the principles of a *state's constitution* as such in accordance with concepts of right (hence a priori, not empirically); if they make much of their knowledge of *human beings* (which is admittedly to be expected, since they have to do with so many) but without knowing the *human being* and what can be made of him (for which a higher standpoint of anthropological observation is required), and equipped with these concepts approach the right of a state and the right of nations, as reason prescribes it, then they cannot make this transition except in the spirit of chicanery; for they follow their usual procedure (of a mechanism in accordance with despotically given coercive laws) even where concepts of reason admit only coercion through

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* These are permissive laws of reason that allow a situation of public right afflicted with injustice to continue until everything has either of itself become ripe for a complete overthrow or has been made almost ripe by peaceful means; for some *rightful* constitution or other, even if it is only to a small degree in conformity with right, is better than none at all, which latter fate (anarchy) a *premature* reform would meet with. Thus political wisdom, in the condition in which things are at present, will make reforms in keeping with the ideal of public right its duty; but it will use revolutions, where nature of itself has brought them about, not to gloss over an even greater oppression, but as a call of nature to bring about by fundamental reforms a lawful constitution based on principles of freedom, the only kind that endures.

^g *despotisirende*

^h *Praxis*

ⁱ *Praktiken*

laws in accordance with principles of freedom, by which a state constitution that can continue valid^j is first possible – a problem the supposedly practical man believes he can solve empirically, ignoring that idea, from experience of how the hitherto most lasting^k constitutions were arranged, even though they were for the most part contrary to right. The maxims he makes use of for this (though he does not let them become known) amount, roughly, to the following sophistical maxims:

1. *Fac et excusa*. Seize any favorable opportunity for taking possession without any sanction to do so (whether of a right of a state over its people or of a right over a neighboring people); the justification can be presented much more easily and elegantly *after the fact*, and the violence glossed over (especially in the first case, where the supreme power within a state is also the legislative authority, which one must obey without reasoning subtly about it),⁹ than if one were willing to devise convincing arguments in advance and to wait for counterarguments about them. Such audacity itself gives a certain semblance of inner conviction about the legitimacy of the deed, and the god *bonus eventus* is the best defense attorney afterward.

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2. *Si fecisti, nega*. Whatever crime you have yourself committed, for example, so as to reduce your people to despair and hence to rebellion, deny that the guilt is *yours*; instead, maintain that your subjects' recalcitrance is to blame or, if you have seized a neighboring nation, human nature, since if a human being does not anticipate another in using force, the other can be surely counted upon to anticipate and seize him.

3. *Divide et impera*. That is, if there are certain privileged leaders in your nation who have chosen you to be merely their chief (*primus inter pares*),^l set them at variance among themselves and at odds with the people; then come to the people's aid with the illusion of greater freedom, and all will be dependent upon your unconditional will. Or if you are dealing with external states, stirring up disagreement among them is a fairly sure means for you to subjugate them one after another by seeming to assist the weaker.

Certainly, no one is now taken in by these political maxims, for all of them are already generally known; nor is it the case that [politicians] are ashamed of them, as if their injustice were all too obvious. For, since great powers are never shamed before the judgment of the masses but only before one another, and, with regard to those principles, only their *failure* and not their becoming public can make those powers ashamed (since with respect to the morality of maxims they are all agreed among themselves), there is still left to them *political honor*, which they can count upon

^j *eine zu Recht beständige Staatsverfassung*

^k *am besten bestandene*

^l first among equals

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with confidence, namely the honor of *augmenting their power*, in whatever way they may acquire it.*

From all these twistings and turnings by which an immoral^m doctrine of prudence tries to bring a condition of peace among human beings out of the warlike condition of a state of nature, at least this much is clear: people can no more get away from the concept of right in their private relations than in their public relations, and they dare not openly base politics merely on the machinations of prudence and so disown all allegianceⁿ to the concept of a public right (this is especially noticeable in the concept of the right of nations); instead they give it all the honor due it, even if they should think up a hundred pretexts and subterfuges to evade it in practice, and attribute to cunning force the authority of being the source and the bond of all right. In order to put an end to this sophistry (if not to the injustice glossed over by it) and to bring the false *representatives* of the powerful on earth to confess that they speak not on behalf of right but of force – the tone of which they adopt, as if it were for them to give orders – it will be well to expose the illusion with which they dupe themselves and others, to find the supreme principle from which the aim of perpetual peace issues, and to show that all the evil standing in its way arises from the fact that the political moralist begins where the moral politician correctly leaves off and, in thus subordinating principles to the end (i.e., putting the cart before the horse), frustrates his own purpose of bringing politics into agreement with morals.

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* Even if it might be doubted whether there is, in *human beings* who live together within a state, a certain malevolence rooted in human nature, and instead of it the deficiency of a culture that has not yet progressed far enough (barbarism) might with some plausibility be cited as the cause of the unlawful appearances of their way of thinking, this malevolence is quite undisguisedly and irrefutably obvious in the external relation of *states* to one another. Within each state it is veiled by the coercion of civil laws, for the citizens' inclination to violence against one another is powerfully counteracted by a greater force, namely that of the government, and so not only does this give the whole a moral veneer (*causae non causae*) but also, by its checking the outbreak of unlawful inclinations, the development of the moral predisposition to immediate respect for right is actually greatly facilitated. For each now believes that he himself would indeed hold the concept of right sacred and follow it faithfully, if only he could expect every other to do likewise, and the government in part assures him of this; thereby a great step is taken *toward* morality (though it is not yet a moral step), toward being attached to this concept of duty even for its own sake, without regard for any return. But since each, with his good opinion of himself, still presupposes the evil disposition in all others, the judgment they mutually pronounce on one another is that they are all *in fact* of little worth (why this is so, since the *nature* of the human being as a free being cannot be blamed, need not be discussed). Since, however, respect for the concept of right, which the human being simply cannot renounce, most solemnly sanctions the theory of his capacity to become adequate to it, each sees that he, for his own part, must act in conformity with it, no matter how others may behave.

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^m *unmoralischen*

ⁿ *allen Gehorsam aufzukündigen*

8:377 In order to make practical philosophy consistent with itself, it is necessary first to decide the question, whether in problems of practical reason one must begin from its *material principle*, the *end* (as object of choice), or from its *formal principle*, that is, the principle (resting only on freedom in external relations) in accordance with which it is said: So act that you can will that your maxim should become a universal law (whatever the end may be).

The latter principle must undoubtedly take precedence; for, as a principle of right, it has unconditional necessity, whereas the former necessitates only if the empirical conditions of the proposed end, namely of its being realized, are presupposed; and even if this end (e.g., perpetual peace) were also a duty, it would still have to be derived from the formal principle of maxims for acting externally. Now the first principle, that of the *political moralist* (the problem of the right of a state, the right of nations, and cosmopolitan right), is a mere *technical problem* (*problema technicum*), whereas the second, as the principle of the *moral politician*, for whom it is a *moral problem* (*problema morale*), is far removed from the other in its procedure for leading to perpetual peace, which is now wished for not only as a natural good but also as a condition^o arising from acknowledgment of duty.

8:378 For the solution of the first problem, namely that of political prudence, much knowledge of nature is required in order to make use of its mechanism for the end proposed, and yet all this is uncertain with respect to its result concerning perpetual peace, whichever of the three divisions of public right one takes. Whether a people can better be kept obedient and also prosperous for a long period of time by severity or by the bait of vanity, whether by the supreme power of one individual or by several leaders united, perhaps even by an aristocracy of merit only or by the power of the people within it, is uncertain. History provides examples of the opposite [resulting] from all kinds of government (with the single exception of the truly republican one, which, however, can occur only to a moral politician). Still more uncertain is a *right of nations* supposedly established on statutes according to ministerial plans, which right is in fact only an empty word and rests on pacts that contain in the very act of their being concluded the secret reservation that they may be violated. On the other hand, the solution of the second problem, namely *that of political wisdom*, urges itself upon us of its own accord, so to speak, is clear to everyone, and puts all artifices to shame; moreover, it leads straight to the end, but with the reminder of prudence not to draw toward it precipitately by force but to approach it steadily as favorable circumstances arise.

It can therefore be said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of pure practical reason and its *justice*, and your end (the blessing of perpetual peace) will come

^o *Zustand*

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to you of itself.” For morals has in it the peculiarity – and indeed with respect to its principles of public right (hence with reference to a politics cognizable a priori) – that the less it makes conduct dependent upon the proposed end, the intended advantage whether natural or moral, so much the more does it harmonize with it on the whole; and this happens because it is just the general will given a priori (within a nation or in the relation of various nations to one another) that alone determines what is laid down as right among human beings; but this union of the will of all, if only it is acted upon consistently in practice, can also, in accordance with the mechanism of nature, be the cause bringing about the effect aimed at and providing the concept of right with efficacy. Thus it is, for example, a principle of moral politics that a people is to unite itself into a state in accordance with freedom and equality as the sole concepts of right, and this principle is not based upon prudence but upon duty. On the other hand political moralists, however subtly they reason about how the natural mechanism of a multitude of human beings entering into society would invalidate those principles and thwart their purpose, and also try to prove their contention against them by examples of badly organized constitutions of ancient and modern times (e.g., of democracies without a representative system), do not deserve a hearing, especially since such a pernicious theory itself produces the trouble it predicts, throwing human beings into one class with other living machines, which need only be aware that they are not free in order to become, in their own judgment, the most miserable of all beings in the world.

The proposition that has become proverbial, *fiat iustitia, pereat mundus*,^p or in German, “let justice reign even if all the rogues in the world perish because of it,” sounds rather boastful but it is true; it is a sturdy principle of right, which bars all the devious paths marked out by cunning or force, provided it is not misinterpreted and taken, as it might be, as permission to make use of one’s own right with utmost rigor (which would conflict with ethical duty) but is taken instead as the obligation of those in power not to deny anyone his right or to encroach upon it out of disfavor or sympathy for others; and for this there is required, above all, a constitution organized in accordance with pure principles of right within a state, and then too the union of this state with other neighboring or even distant states for a lawful settlement of their disputes (by analogy with a universal state). This proposition means nothing other than that political maxims must not issue from the welfare and happiness of each state that is to be expected from following them, and so not from the end that each of them makes its object – (from “I will”)^q as the supreme (though empirical) principle of political wisdom – but must issue from the pure concept of duty of right (from “I ought,”^r the

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^p do justice though the world perish

^q vom Wollen

^r vom Sollen

principle of which is given a priori by pure reason), whatever the natural consequences may be. The world will by no means perish by there coming to be fewer evil people. What is morally evil has the property, inseparable from its nature, of being at odds with itself in its aims and destructive of them (especially in relation to others similarly disposed), so that it clears the way for the (moral) principle of the good, even if progress is slow.

Thus there is *objectively* (in theory) no conflict at all between morals and politics. But *subjectively* (in the self-seeking propensity of human beings, which, however, because it is not based on maxims of reason, must still not be called practice), such conflict will remain; and it may always remain because it serves as the whetstone of virtue, whose true courage (according to the principle *tu ne cede malis, sed contra audientior ito*)⁹ in the present case consists, not so much in resolutely standing up to the troubles and sacrifices one must thereby take upon oneself, but in looking straight in the face what is far more dangerous, the deceitful and treacherous but yet subtly reasoning principle in ourselves which pretends that the weakness of human nature justifies any transgression, and in overcoming its craftiness.

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In fact the political moralist can say that regent and people or nation and nation do *each other* no wrong when they attack each other by force or fraud, though they do wrong generally in that they deny all respect to the concept of right,¹⁰ which alone could found peace in perpetuity. For since one of them transgresses his duty toward the other, who is just as wrongfully disposed toward him, when the two destroy themselves it *happens* to both of them quite rightly, though in such a way that there is always enough of this race left to keep this game going to the most distant times, so that posterity may some day take a warning example from them. Providence is thus justified in the course of the world; for the moral principle in the human being never dies out, and reason, which is capable pragmatically of carrying out rightful ideas in accordance with that principle, grows steadily with advancing culture, but so too does the guilt for those transgressions. It seems that creation alone, namely that such a race of corrupt beings should have been put on earth at all, cannot be justified by any theodicy (if we assume that the human race never will be or can be better off);¹¹ but this standpoint for appraising matters is much too high for us, as if we could support for theoretical purposes our concepts (of the wisdom) of the supreme power inscrutable to us. To such desperate conclusions we are unavoidably driven if we do not assume that pure principles of right have objective reality, that is, that they can be carried out; and people within a state as well as states in their relations with one another must act in accordance with those principles, regardless of what objec-

⁹ Do not yield to troubles, but press on more boldly. Virgil *Aeneid* 6.95.

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tions empirical politics may bring against them. True politics can therefore not take a step without having already paid homage to morals, and although politics by itself is a difficult art, its union with morals is no art at all; for as soon as the two conflict with each other, morals cuts the knot that politics cannot untie. The right of human beings must be held sacred, however great a sacrifice this may cost the ruling power. One cannot compromise here and devise something intermediate, a pragmatically conditioned right (a cross between right and expediency); instead, all politics must bend its knee before right, but in return it can hope to reach, though slowly, the level where it will shine unfailingly.

II.

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ON THE AGREEMENT OF POLITICS WITH MORALS IN ACCORD WITH THE TRANSCENDENTAL CONCEPT OF PUBLIC RIGHT

If I abstract from all the *matter* of public right as teachers of right usually think of it (from the various empirically given relations of individuals within a state or also of states to one another), I am still left with the *form of publicity*, the possibility of which is involved in every claim to a right, since without it there would be no justice (which can be thought only as *publicly known*) and so too no right, which is conferred only by justice.

Every claim to a right must have this capacity for publicity, and since one can very easily appraise whether it is present in a case at hand – that is, whether or not publicity is consistent with an agent's principles – it can yield a criterion to be found a priori in reason that is very easy to use; in case they are inconsistent we can cognize at once, as if by an experiment of pure reason, the falsity (illegitimacy) of the claim in question (*praetensio iuris*).

After abstracting in this way from everything empirical that the concept of the right of a state or the right of nations contains (such as the malevolence of human nature, which makes coercion necessary), one can call the following proposition the *transcendental formula* of public right.

“All actions relating to the rights of others are wrong if their maxim is incompatible with publicity.”

This principle is not to be regarded as *ethical* only (belonging to the doctrine of virtue) but also as *juridical* (bearing upon the right of human beings). For a maxim that I cannot *divulge* without thereby defeating my own purpose, one that absolutely must *be kept secret* if it is to succeed and that I cannot *publicly acknowledge* without unavoidably arousing everyone's opposition to my project, can derive this necessary and universal, hence a priori foreseeable, resistance of everyone to me only from the injustice with which it threatens everyone. This principle is, moreover, only *negative*, that is, it serves only for cognizing by means of it what is *not right*

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