

## Editorial

### War Dossier

The journal of the Graduate Program in Psychoanalysis, Health, and Society at the Veiga de Almeida University - *Trivium: interdisciplinary studies* - in partnership with the Research Group on Human Rights, Democracy, and Memory at the Institute of Advanced Studies of the University of São Paulo presents a collective work built by authors from various fields of knowledge who are dedicated to scrutinizing the phenomenon of war. Invaded by many local wars with global impact; millions of refugees as an immediate consequence of attacks on civilians, the rise of belligerent and segregationist governments on all continents, and the course of two major armed conflicts today that, in turn, serve as possible alibis for the outbreak of new global conflicts.

The dossier sought to explore the experience, logic, and irrationality of WAR, as a challenge to thought that, active, also persists beneath the rubble, in search of new beginnings which may question what, in the peremptory discourses and actions of the wars, inundated with relentless certainties, act for the preservation of race, nation, and for the prevalence of brute force. In the same way, we intend to question these same certainties, reclaiming everything that those same ideas practiced by successive governments has seized from lives, hopes, and futures, yesterday and today, and promises to seize in the future.

It is unlikely that there will be a single concept for war, because it is, above all, an experience. A conflict between nations, ignited in any corner, interferes with and influences the dynamics of the planet and causes a myriad of actions, reactions, counter-reactions to proliferate which, in turn, fuel disputes between interpretations and versions that do not adhere to any clearly defined logic, except for the binary logic of friend and foe.

Such versions are decisive in keeping active certain dynamics of exchanges, interests, and the commodification of bodies and people feeding prosperous markets that thrive on the funeral remains of the rubble from which they extract their wealth and prestige.

Outside the direct circuit in which wars are triggered or occur, Brazil and Latin America suffer from their geographical proximity and direct political influence of one of the countries that controls, fuels or prevents wars. As one of the effects of this influence, we suffer from internal wars constituted, in turn, by 'internal enemies' and by the forms of thought and subjectivation imposed by these values, beliefs, and commandments.

The coups in Chile under Salvador Allende, with the La Moneda Palace bombed by planes in 1973, and in Brazil, under João Goulart, with the American military support stationed on the Caribbean coast in 1964, are unmistakable evidence of this influence defining destinies.

We are also bewildered, as immigrants, by wars or threats that occur overseas, in countries to which we feel affiliated by ancestry, and we demand ourselves to take and defend positions for which we are rarely sufficiently informed, thus inheriting positions and interests of others.

Impacted by wars, but often poorly informed about them, we find, however, that sometimes we are dragged into them, regardless of whether or how any government leader decided for their own, public, or secret reasons to attack, kill, challenge, or occupy peoples in distant places, generating a diffuse obligation that imposes itself on the responsibility we all have towards the unilateral decision of a few, to put thousands, millions of lives at risk simultaneously.

Whether we like it or not, among the consequences of wars, there circulates among the masses the possible authorization and (in)decision about who should die and who should live. War forces us to don the robes of the tyrant, any tyrant, and we issue our(?) opinions about living and dying as if we were talking about choices, electoral contests, or sports club championships. Yes, the assassination of the tyrannical father also instilled in the brothers the desire for tyranny, casting them perpetually into the abyss of irresponsibility and cowardice. The assassination of the father concealed the murderers within a totality (and mass) of brothers, leaving unanswered the questions: who killed? who planned it? who supported? (Endo,2013)

War trivializes life and death and, likewise, ridicules circumspection, rectitude, and respect for those who are devastated by it, treating women's bodies as spoils. (Svetlana 2016; Endo, 2023). Many, however, tend to express opinions precisely in the face of an imposed experience, to which any opinions are laughable, disposable, and disillusioned under the force of machines. (Endo, 2012).

Robert Fisk, probably one of the greatest war reporters known, would state in bold letters in the title of his great book published in 2007, that every war paradoxically justifies itself as a "war for civilization." I quote:

With great unease from my father and stoic acceptance from my mother, I spent a large part of my life in wars. These were also fought "for civilization." In Afghanistan, I saw the Soviets fighting for their "internationalist duty", in conflict against "international terror". Their Afghan opponents were evidently fighting against "communist aggression" and for Allah. I provided information from the front where the Iranians were fighting what they called the Imposed War against Saddam Hussein, who referred to the invasion of Iran in 1980 as the Whirlwind War. I saw the Israelis invade Lebanon twice, and then invade the Palestinian West Bank, in order, they claimed, to "purge the land of terrorism." I was present when the Algerian military declared war on Muslims for the same apparent reason, torturing and executing prisoners with the same abandon as their enemies. Then, in 1990, Saddam invaded Kuwait, and the Americans sent their armies to the Gulf to liberate the emirate and impose "a new world order." Since the 1991 war ended, I have always written the words "new world order" in my notebooks followed by a question mark. (FISK, 2007, p.20).

These memories of Fisk indicate only that war magnetizes the banality of simultaneously gathering all motivations and none, but, in all cases, it appeals to a totalizing, universalizing concept to legitimize its bloodthirsty nature and its peremptory decision to exterminate lives emptied of singularities.

Its effects, however, are not totalizing, but diverse, determined, and enduring. But who will care about the mortified and defeated enemy? For the family incinerated as a

collateral effect of a projectile whose course was poorly adjusted? For the child imploded for being in the wrong place at the right time?

These will be the lasting effects on pacifists, witnesses, and survivors. As Robert Fisk ponders:

The direct physical results of all these conflicts will remain - and must remain in my memory until the day of my death. I don't need to reread my mountain of notebooks to remember the Iranian soldiers on a military train north of Tehran, with towels, coughing Saddam's gas in clots of blood and mucus while reading the Quran. I don't need any of my newspaper clippings to remember the father who, after a cluster bomb attack in Iraq in 2003, extended to me what looked like a crumpled piece of bread, but was half a crumpled baby. (FISK, 2007, p. 20).

This, which neither offends nor raises questions among those who declare, defend, and maintain wars, and need to invent enemies, has long spread through internal wars, explicit and asymmetric extermination practices, and collects thousands of dead and deaths through complicity, negligence, and the deliberate act of letting those who would have no firepower or counterattack die when their lives are attacked. Internal enemies, as the armies, armed forces, and police of Latin America learned well during periods of exception. First, with the French colonial army and then with the American one. (Endo,2019). Faced with the unpreparedness of national armies for wars between nations, they turn their weapons against the internal enemy, against the national, the native, the new enemy.

Among us, the governments and their parliaments obediently import the war on drugs; against the Black people; against Indigenous populations, the LGBTQIAP+ community, and the poor. Weapons against the unarmed, violence and force against the vulnerable have been acting profusely for centuries, without minimal regulation, outside any legal framework. In fact, they sometimes mock it, and at times, they use it. And negligence, seemingly unarmed, emerges as a machine of mass destruction. What consequences and accountability for 700 thousand deaths from a disease that could have been contained?

Supported by this argument, which precipitates and authorizes the outbreak of internal wars, secular genocides are caught in the act. In them, an armed conflict is displayed in which only one side is strong and heavily armed, producing mass killings, committed as a banal example of the ethical commiseration that authorizes unreported, uninvestigated, and/or unrepaired deaths in Brazil; illegal execution of death sentences; constant negligence and threat to entire peoples, groups, and ethnicities to be erased.

The internal and external wars that are waged and never end affect everyone, nationals and foreigners, combatants and civilians, and result from a paradigmatic and warlike conduct that defines who deserves and can live, and who should merely survive or die. Its conceptual and theoretical framework rests on the common foundations of military thinking, which knows how to unleash wars but ignores their effects of healing and remission. As I once heard from an Angolan activist: "The military doesn't know many things, but they know how to stage coups."

It is obviously about assessing the risks of igniting an internal or external war based on the possible advantages that the victors consolidate in prestige, wealth, and the exercise of power. For this, imbecilic discourses are forged that deepen and gather scattered

affections, stunned by extraordinary violence, and convert them into support for the only solution, a catalyst for collapses that consists of applying the most failed formula known: violence to combat violence.

Erich Ludendorff was a general of the German imperial army with active participation in the First World War. Far-right military officer, he broke with Adolf Hitler before the Second World War, in 1930. His positions on war, however, provide an impressive overview of the principles and forces that keep fueling wars everywhere active. In his book *Total War*, written in the century following the publication of *On War* by Clausewitz (2023), Ludendorff weaves various criticisms of Clausewitz, in order to prepare his thesis on total war as a paradigm of nations, and its necessarily perennial presence in the formation, manners, customs, and emotional disposition of a people. Total war is the radical affirmation of the state of permanent war.

The book is rich in the exposition of a defining war ideology, present in the strategic musings that still guide governments and national states today. His propositions do not merely aspire war and its strategies, but the conditions that generate a permanently belligerent state.

I quote Ludendorff in one of the many passages where he defines his ideology of total war:

It is only by respecting the physical laws of the race that the full importance of various biological measures in the education of a generation of robust boys will be realized, measures such as the prohibition of alcohol, narcotics, and nicotine, which harm births and weaken health. It is only by respecting the psychic laws of the race and also by improving economic conditions that a sense of responsibility will be awakened and, among women, for the increase of the population, and that women will come to accept the fulfillment of maternal duties as a sacred duty of the race. It is only in this way that the immeasurable danger of depopulation, always sensitive for an army, can be overcome, and it is only in this manner that a healthy procreative generation will be developed, which will provide the army with many vigorous recruits, capable of fighting and enduring total war (Ludendorff, ebook, n.p., n.d.).

Ludendorff aspired to power, total power. He ran for president; he lost the election. He could have won, like so many who have led and are leading governments, and others who aspire to do so in the near future.

Freud, in *Current Considerations on War and Death*, knew and testified, like Fisk, that war is merely synonymous with causing death. He thought, in the text *Introduction to the Psychoanalysis of War Neuroses*, that a conflict between the peaceful self and the combatant self was fought psychically in young soldiers during wars, between the civilian self (not necessarily peaceful) and the soldier self (not necessarily combatant).

Conflict imposed under coercion and demanded urgently and compulsorily. Killing and dying would be catapulted from the realm of desire in times of peace, and would reach the stages of the imperative of necessity, to become bodies accounted for in national discourses. The greatest ambition of the war advocates is however, precisely the compulsory dissolution of such conflict through the overlay of perpetual preparation for war. (total war). There is no peaceful self that is worthy, according to Ludendorff, if it is not perpetually preparing for war. This includes mothers at the very moment they

conceive their children, presuming them to be soldiers and preparing them for death at birth.

The paradigm of total war looms over countries and nations, and the illusion of perpetual peace darkens as pathetic and null. Their aspirations and mechanisms to achieve it, fail both within and outside nations and put democracies at risk. It's no longer about peace and war, but of the attitude towards living and dying. As Freud prophesied in 1915,

Let us remember the old saying: *Si vis pacem, para bellum*. If you want to maintain peace, prepare for war. In the current moment, it would be fitting to change it: *si vis vitam, para mortem*: if you want to endure life, prepare for death. (FREUD, 1915, p.246).

No more total war, but total death as confrontation, action, and thought in the face of what is to come. A radical shift from narcissistic despair under the illusion of the expectation of peace through war, to caring for the world, for life, and for the future, in the face of the recognition of lives that end and are ended, and the end of the pact between tyrants. To oppose wars is to oppose the resurgence of tyrannies that are now organizing everywhere, whose main objective is to come to power to operate the war machines (armies and police). under the command of states, indiscriminately, against civilian and military targets. The desire for total war has long since expanded and immersed itself as an organized and institutional apparatus for the outflow of the drive to destroy and, in the face of this desire, democracies and democrats seem no more than pusillanimous figures from a past that this desire also wants to exterminate.

We therefore invite all readers willing to ask themselves about the possibility of draining our drives from the act of destruction, to extract from each of the essays at hand elements that will renew thoughts, analyses and actions on the possibility of dismantling a permanent state of war, whose ambition is to radiate indefinitely, animated by violence and cruelty, inserted into the daily civil life of all civilians. In the calculated chaos of wars, however, one thing is certain: whether we are geographically close or far from where such calamities occur, the experience of war will always reach us spatially and, temporally, it will reach generations to come.

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