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Objavljen rad u FILOZOFSKI GODIŠNJAK, 25/2012, str. 335-364.
Glasnik Instituta za filozofiju Filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu

Originalni naučni rad
UDK 172.4:271.2 ; 271.2-662:172.4

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**COMPLEXITY OF THE CONCEPTION
OF PACIFISM IN ORTHODOXY**

Introduction

Pacifism in the West is naturally associated with Christianity because its deepest roots are in the beliefs of Christian sects. The pacifist standpoint is also imputed on the Orthodox, who are blamed to deviate from the fundamental Christian dogmas and canons by the use of force, thus betraying key Christian messages of nonviolence, love, peace. Non-Christian and so-called Christian views on peace and war are represented as Orthodox unreasonably and unjustly. Therefore, there is great need to determine the difference in the meaning of basic concepts and, from a contemporary perspective, re-examine the concept of pacifism in Orthodoxy.

Pacifism in the Orthodox Church is not new and unknown topic –issue. Even in hagiographic writings from the ninth century, *The Life of St. Cyril*,¹ we can find the Christians are blamed to deviate from the nonviolent actions their faith obligates them. Saracens,² polemicizing against the Philosopher, as they called St. Cyril (Constantine)³, raise the question: “If, therefore, Christ is your God, why not do as commanded? In evangelical books, in fact, it is written, ‘Pray for enemies, do good to those who hate and persecute you, and turn the cheek to those who hit you.’ You, however, do not do so, but on the contrary sharpen a weapon against those who do this to you”.⁴

However, the theological and philosophical (ethical) deepening of the Orthodox view on pacifism was largely provoked by Tolstoyan philosophizing about nonviolence. L. N. Tolstoy and his school generally called use of force violence and they rejected any external enforcement and prevention as a form of violence. There was a big problem, that later led to new misconceptions, schisms and lack of precise understanding and definition of terms, since each use of force (coercion) and evil were perceived as synonyms and they obviously are not. The problem of nonopposition to “evil by force” was formulated

¹ An unknown writer of the Life of St. Cyril was Cyril's contemporary, and according to the research of F. Grivec, the book was written shortly after 869. Clement of Ohrid, Constantine of Preslav and unknown writers, *Cyril and Methodius, Lives, Services, Canons, Praise*, edited by Dj. Trifunović, translated by I. Grickat, O. Nedeljković, Đ. Trifunović, SKZ, Belgrade 1964, 239

² Agarenes and Saracens is a medieval term for Arabs (...) Clement of Ohrid, Constantine of Preslav and unknown writers, *Cyril and Methodius, Lives, Services, Canons, Praise*, 225

³ Cyril and Methodius, known as “Slavic apostles” spread literacy among the Slavs. Cyril was very knowledgeable and taught philosophy at the college of Constantinople.

⁴ Clement of Ohrid, Constantine of Preslav and unknown writers, *Cyril and Methodius, Lives, Services, Canons, Praise*, 63

as a problem of non-opposition to “evil by evil” or returning “evil for evil”. By identifying the use of force with “the satanic evil” and the use of evil with “devil’s way”, Tolstoyan view prohibited it once and for all, without exception, believing that it is better to die or be killed rather than use force. Therefore, simply to say, Tolstoy and his followers first equated the use of force and violence and then violence and evil, from which it follows that any use of force is evil.

Tolstoyan quasi-Christian concept of absolute non-opposition to evil by force prompted a reaction from the pleiad of important Russian philosophers and thinkers of the twentieth century: N.A. Berdyaev, S.N. Bulgakov, B.P. Viseslavcev, V.V. Ivanov, I.A. Ilin, L.P. Karsavin, N.O. Loski, V.V. Rozanov, F.A. Stepun, E.N. Trubetskoy, G.P. Fedotov, P.A. Florensky, G.V. Florovsky, S.L. Frank, V.F. Ern and other important Russian thinkers, who were primarily engaged in philosophical analysis of war and peace as complex ethical and religious phenomena.

The question of countering evil by force of arms, for the Orthodox is a deep, delicate and very complex. Being invited to the moral perfection: “Be, perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5: 48), the difficult question is whether they are permitted to oppose evil by force of arms, or whether they are allowed not to oppose? In contrast, on the one hand, to the members of some Christian sects (Quakers, Anabaptists), who can never be soldiers, and on the other hand, Jesuits, as it is inconceivable that they are pacifists, the Orthodox view is specific and more complex. Therefore, one should distinguish between the original Christianity, that is, Orthodox, and the Christianity materialized and interpreted by some religious communities or sects, groups or individuals.

Christians, especially Orthodox, are faced with difficult decisions related to armed conflicts. How to act and behave in the world, that “whole lies in the power of evil” (1 John 5: 19), which is filled with violence and not reject the world as such and not slip into any sheepfold (national, state) hiding behind certain moral, customary, social, historical or traditional justification. For Orthodox Christians, there is always the ontological-ethical tension, being the members of the Church and at the same time citizens of certain countries and members of their nation. This division or tension increases and complicates especially in connection with the Christian response to the challenges related to armed conflicts.

Since in orthodoxy there is no unified view on the use of force of all members of the Church – clergy (priests), monks and laity (believers), but it differs depending on the position and role, or service in the Church, our idea is to examine these differences – the *layers* in the perception of the use of force in orthodoxy.

By *pacifism*, we mean the view that opposes any use of force, war and killing in war. Pacifism does not accept the justification of war or participation in the war based on principles. It is a modern statement developed during World War I. Before that, pacifism was related to efforts for peace in general.⁵ Pacifists believe not only that violence is evil, but also that it is morally wrong to use force for defense, punishment or prevention of violence. Our intention is to examine in light of the Gospel and the orthodox tradition all three relationships: a) to violence b) to killing in war, and c) to the war. The word “pacifism” (Latin: *pacificus* – *pacifistic*, derived from the noun *nom.* *pax*, *gen.* *pacis* –

⁵ *World Encyclopedia of Peace*, Volume 1-2, Pergamon press, Oxford-New York, Beijing, Frankfurt, Sao Paulo, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto, 90

peace and the verb *facere* –do)⁶, formed in 1901, is unknown to the Orthodox East. The word “peacemaking”, which has the old Slavonic root, is appropriate for the East.

Orthodox literally means right thinking or right belief and right worship (of God). It is usually defined as a proper thinking, proper belief and the set of all Orthodox Christians.⁷ We do not perceive orthodoxy as ideology, religion, denomination or confessional group and community, but we consider orthodoxy the Church. Without the Church or outside the Church, there is no orthodoxy. The concept of *orthodoxy* does not only mean the opinion and belief, but life – simultaneously and in parallel.⁸

The concept of pacifism in orthodoxy is not just a theoretical and theological issue, but has concrete consequences, since the moral arguments mobilize and limit people, and in the armed conflicts taking place worldwide, a number of Orthodox Christians and Orthodox chaplains also participate. Authentic application of the church canonical tradition to the specific requirements of each time re-opens the ethical issues the Church faces: who does a Christian fight against now, should Orthodox Christians do the military service, what happens when they kill in armed conflicts, what is the attitude towards the participation of Orthodox believers and chaplains in “humanitarian interventions” or serving in private military companies, etc?

We are contemporaries of slow, but probably definitive withdrawal of the state as the sole and undisputed actor of armed conflicts, and “contemporary”, “modern”, “new” wars further impose new ethical issues upon the Christians. In addition to increasing the number, post-Cold War conflicts are characterized by: de-etatisation and privatization, demilitarization, asymmetry and interventionism. There are realistic statements that, today and tomorrow, the religious attitudes, beliefs and fanaticism, play and will play a larger role in motivating armed conflicts than they, at least in the Christian world, played in the past 300 years, and that the revival of religion as the cause of armed conflicts will also lead to changes in the behavior of soldiers in armed conflicts.⁹ According to the more radical views, everything that is happening in the world today are purely religious processes, which are reflected in all spheres of human life and only in the context of these processes everything happening to us now can be understood and explained.¹⁰

⁶ I. Klajn and M. Šipka, *A Large Dictionary of Foreign Words and Phrases*, Prometej, Novi Sad, 2006, 907

⁷ Č. Drašković, *Dictionary of Pastoral-pedagogical Theology*, 27

⁸ The essential specifics of Orthodoxy are strictly preservation of Christian faith and church organization, provided in the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils. Then, there is the catholicity, which means that the Orthodox Church is ecumenical and universal. Its dogmatism, liturgical and ethics are intended, without reservation, for the whole world. Orthodox churches do not have geographical or administrative center, but from the administrative, religious and legal point of view, and in the financial operations they are independent local Churches. However, they represent the spiritual entity in terms of service, dogmatic and moral teaching, the liturgy and general canons or the unity of faith, grace, prayer, liturgy, church discipline and church hierarchy.

The head of the Orthodox Church is the Lord Jesus Christ, its founder, and the apparent supremacy of the management and learning does not belong to any particular patriarch or bishop, but only the Ecumenical Council, whose decisions are binding upon all Orthodox autocephalous churches, and no local Church can change them. Orthodox Church, so far, has recognized judgments of only seven ecumenical councils.

⁹ “If the growing militant religion persists, it will almost certainly force others to follow its example. People will be forced to defend their ideals, their way of life and survival, and they will be able to do so only under the banner of a great and powerful idea. In each origin, the idea may be secular; yet, the very fact that we are fighting for it will give it the religious overtone and our commitment something that resembles a religious zeal. Thus, the recent revival of Muhammad may lead to the revival of the Christian Lord, and he will not be the Lord of love but war. If the war in future is led for the souls of men, then the importance of expanding territorial control will lose their significance”.

Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, Official Gazette and the Faculty of Security, Belgrade, 2010, 198-199

¹⁰ T. Grachova, *Holy Russia against the Khazars*, Holy Russia, Belgrade, 2009, 169

There is no doubt that a number of colossal threats are looming over the world (nuclear cataclysm, environmental disaster, the growth of poverty, demographic explosion, global terrorism), and in religion we find profound responses to violence and armed conflict. Therefore, in this paper, we set a difficult task to examine the specificity of the Orthodox understanding of pacifism and offer a critical review, by indicating what is in it that aspires to universality, or moral principle.

The question is how to get to the Orthodox point of view on the issue of pacifism or some other important ethical issue for the man and the community? Who is authority in the Orthodox to interpret ethical issues, to determine what is moral and what is not, including the relationship to the use of force, war and peace? According to Christian ethics, what is the accomplishment of God's will is morally; therefore, morality is the accomplishment of God's will as it is expressed in the Holy Scripture, Sacred Tradition and the life of the Church. However, the question is – what is the will of God, how can we, people, as created and imperfect beings know what is morally best in the face of God?

According to the Old Testament, the will of God is expressed as a command or prohibition, and relates to human behavior. It determines, limits human actions (behavior): “do not kill”, “do not steal”, “do not commit adultery” and others. However, as for the Revelation of Christ, obeying God's will is no longer only regulatory compliance, simple fulfillment of “laws”, the laws of behavior, but also defines the inner, as S. Frank calls it – *organization of the human spirit, proper inner life, the moral condition of man* or man's will.

Christ's Sermon on the Mount speaks best about the difference between the commandments in the Old Testament and the vows in the New Testament. Christ's vows are not only and exclusively the rules of conduct, but the principles that determine a person's proper inner life. “Our actions themselves, as such, cannot be in the strict and literal sense of the word “Christian”, they are such only to the extent to which they express and reveal the true Christian life”, S. Frank correctly observes.¹¹

The authorities who can interpret the will of God are perceived differently among the Christians, so the differences between Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism are observed in this regard. The will of God is always interpreted according to human logic. Of course, this may cause and causes many misunderstandings, doubts, disagreements and even conflicts. Thus, in Roman Catholicism the authority is the Church or the Pope, whose interpretation is correct and binding for the believers. For example, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace published *The Basics of Social Teachings of the Catholic Church*¹², which explicitly highlights the Pope's view, or the Roman Catholic viewpoint on all issues important to Roman Catholics and their social life. In Protestantism, the interpreter of God's will is the Holy Scripture itself, which is interpreted by special interpreters of the Bible. Among them, there are great differences in interpretations of what exactly the Bible means in relation to specific ethical issues.

In Orthodoxy, there are three views on who can authoritatively interpret the will of God, which Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon calls: “fundamentalist”, “juridical” and “charismatic”. According to the first, so-called “fundamentalist” view, the

¹¹ S. Frank, *Light in the Darkness: An Essay in Christian Ethics and Social Philosophy*, Logos – Brimo, Belgrade, 2004, 159

¹² Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Basics of social teaching of Catholic Church*, translated by Divna Lalević, Conrad Adenauer Foundation and Archdiocese of Belgrade, Belgrade, 2006

will of God is revealed by the literal interpretation of the Holy Scripture, and arguments in response to the ethical issues refer to the specific parts of the Bible and the works of the Fathers of the Church. According to the second, “juridical” view, the will of God is interpreted by the institutions of the Church, bishops, either individually or in church councils. “Church Council Committees” are established, which discusses some ethical issues and communicate their conclusions to believers and to the public as the official church council decisions, as the “official views” of the Church on them. As for the third, “charismatic” view, the will of God can be interpreted most faithfully only by “spiritual leaders”, who by their farsightedness and the gift of discernment can authoritatively decide what is ethically correct.¹³ Our approach will be closest to the first view.

Only the Good Truly Prevails the Evil ***About Non-Opposition to Evil***

At the beginning, it is necessary to examine the doctrine of *nonopposition to evil*, which is presented as Christian. Prior to the considerations relating to the Orthodox view on the issues involving when, how, by what means we should oppose evil, it is necessary to examine whether a Christian should oppose evil or not? No matter how absurd the attitude *not to oppose evil* seems, in terms of any opposition, it must be tested because it is presented as Christian.

What does the doctrine of *non-opposition to evil* mean? Why is it associated with the Christian standpoint, does it have anything to do with orthodoxy and what? First, let us list the parts in the Gospels that are used as the basis for the pacifist view on the absolute non-opposition to evil. In the first place, it is the Christ’s Sermon on the Mount: “You have heard that it was said: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you, do not oppose an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.¹⁴ And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles”¹⁵ (Matthew 5, 38- 41). Then: “Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse ... Do not render evil for evil unto any man; try to do good to all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but give place to rage, for it is written: Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord. Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing so, you will heap coals of fire on his head. Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12, 14, 17-21).

Being captured in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus also does not allow the use of physical force or weapons. He says to Apostle Peter, who tried to defend him by force of arms: “Return thy sword to its place; for all those who take the sword shall perish by the sword.” (Matthew 26, 52). Christ does not use physical force to oppose when crucified on the cross, either. Moreover, before being killing he prays for his enemies: “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing!” (Luke 23, 24). Christ’s

¹³ J. Zizioulas of Pergamon, “Ontology and Ethics”, *Sabornost*, Journal of the Diocese of Braničevo, 1-4, Požarevac 2003, 97-101

¹⁴ Blow on the right cheek with the outer part of the hand meant for the Jews, at the time, particularly great insult.

¹⁵ This applies to the service to government, namely, if the Roman government asked Jews to carry the mail for a mile, to carry it two miles without any resistance.

opposition when one of the servants slapped him was the question: "If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike me?"

Thus, may from the previous Christ's vows and procedures be concluded that evil should not be opposed? Since the *Holy Scripture* was written in a language of symbols rather than concepts, it offers the possibility for different interpretations. Therefore, there is a view that every individual, social group or socio-historical formation interprets the Bible in the own way, depending on the socio-historical circumstances, resulting in a high degree of relativism that the Bible offers, including the ethical sense. For the Orthodox, it is unacceptable.

The fact that the analysis of some of Christ's messages and vows can be stopped at their different layers and veils of secrecy does not mean that their ultimate meaning and significance is not known and cannot be grasped. Like the host's message can be best and sometimes only understood by his folks, the Orthodox believe that the full depth of Christ's teachings cannot be conceived outside the Church, because it has inherited the truth of Revelation and collected the experience of spiritual experiment of many centuries and past generations.

There are different and even diametrically opposed interpretations of these parts in the New Testament.¹⁶ As arguments for the absolute "nonopposition to evil", it is stated that opposition only stirs malice, even more provoking the abuser and encouraging him to seek new inconveniences for the affected side. One has to endure human malice, because his concession, in principle, disarms and calms the abuser, and if only the first onslaught of wickedness is sustained, he will have pity and leave the victim alone. In this regard, Saint Justin (Popović) says: "For nothing tames the offender like meekly suffering of the offended. To oppose evil to evil, and insult to insult, is incomparably easier than to oppose evil to good and insult to forgiveness and Christ-like love. Because the latter requires a far greater feat and an army of courageous holy virtues..."¹⁷

However, from this, we cannot conclude that there is absolutely no need to oppose evil; this speaks on the method and means to be used in countering the external evil. This method is also the opposition to evil but with humility, patience for the love of good, making sacrifices for the good and not from weakness, sentimentality, cowardice, or for not distinguishing between the good and the evil. Literally understood Gospel requirement of "non-opposition to evil" and transmitted as a rule to the external human behavior, is essentially the "ideology of clean hands", or perverted Christian conscience by which the imperative is to preserve the inviolable purity of the Christian conscience in all circumstances and regardless of all consequences. It is not only the Orthodox point of view, but is opposed to the Christian conscience – Pharisaism. Such personal "sinlessness" and "salvation" in itself may be the attitude of some Christian sects, but they are incompatible with the Orthodox Church.

Non-opposition to evil, external and internal, means to accept evil, subdue to it and become an instrument of evil. If an indulgent man constantly, consistently and continuously does not stand up to evil, he eventually concludes that evil is not entirely bad, that there are good elements in it, and finally, becomes obsessed with it himself. As a rule, the one who received evil in oneself, thus becoming evil, does not and cannot, is not able to oppose evil. Spiritual law is: "A man who does not oppose evil is absorbed

¹⁶ See: E. V. Sectorsky, *Christian Ethics*, Brotherhood of St. Simeon Mirotočivi, Vrnjačka Banja 1999, 80

¹⁷ Justin (Popović), *Interpretation of the Gospel of St. Matthew*, Monastery St. Ćelije, Belgrade 1990, 216

and becomes obsessed with evil". Therefore, the moral principle is that the man's ongoing obligation is to oppose without pity both evil in him and the external evil, evil in others, in the appropriate manner and by appropriate means.

About Evil – Orthodox View

Here are just some views on how is evil conceived in the Orthodox tradition. Evil can be understood as an ontological and ethical category. St. Maximus the Confessor defines evil as follows: "It is neither the nature, nor the essence, nor the individual, nor the energy nor the will or the desire, nor the attitude, but it is precisely the absence of the energy of creatures to achieve the union with God in Christ".¹⁸

The Orthodox Encyclopedia distinguishes between *the physical harm* that impairs the development of physical existence and *the moral evil* that contradicts the moral life and the Will of God, and is commonly known as sin.¹⁹ We can speak about evil only in connection with a man, and not with natural events, better to say with the man's mental-spiritual world rather than his external condition, because man's physical movements themselves are neither good nor evil.²⁰ According to the Christian view, evil comes either from demonic forces or from human passions and is the result of thoughts that are contrary to God's law and God's will.²¹ The man's actions or practices are external events, to discover the inner good or evil, or their immixture, or inner intentions, decisions, feelings, beliefs. Why does Christ call the Pharisees whitewashed tombs? Because they only pretend to be good (fair, restrained, etc.) and in the depths of their souls and essence of their beings they remain full of envy, malice, revenge, intrigue and non-benevolence.

The criterion of moral values is normally applied to the "internal manifested in the external", what is the actual procedure, done or not, what should or should not be done, not the idea, desire or imagination itself. However, for Christian ethics, the field of application of the criterion of moral values extends to the man's inner world. An evil thought of a man is not his sin yet, it can be a "favor" of the evil one, or the enemy of the mankind. When does it become a sin then? Only if a man pays attention to it, and due to negligence, weakness, ignorance (non-recognition), freely accepts it and begins to link it to other thoughts, emotions and will. Then, it is a sin. This is the preparation made for the external procedure. That is why two exactly the same procedures can be completely differently morally valued, which really is not necessary to explain here.²²

Inner Struggle against Evil

Since the source of the good and the evil is in the inner mental and spiritual world of a man, then the struggle against evil and its overcoming can and should take place in that interior. Apostle Paul explicitly and clearly points to the spiritual sphere of

¹⁸ See: St. Maximus the Confessor, PG 90, 253 ab

¹⁹ The Orthodox encyclopaedia, I, Orthodox word, Novi Sad, 2010, 337

²⁰ Behind the man's smile, the cruellest intentions can be hidden, cutting on the body of another person may be either attempted murder or surgical incision for the life-saving surgery.

²¹ "Hear, O earth: behold, I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their plans, because they have not listened to my words, and as for my law, they have rejected it also" (Jeremiah 6, 9)

²² One can get in the army to defend the fatherland, or spy for the enemy, be killed in defense of a friend or robbery.

this struggle: “we do not fight against the blood and the body, but against principalities, authorities, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spirits of wickedness in heavenly places” (Ephesians 6, 12). Nowhere like in the Orthodox tradition the issue of internal struggle against evil is so deeply considered, which we find with the great teachers of the Church, clergy, saints like Anthony the Great, Macarius the Great, John Climacus (also known as John of the Ladder), Isaac the Syrian and many others. St. John Climacus, for example, wrote his famous *Ladder*, a document consisting of thirty lessons as thirty degrees of spiritual development, which includes the deepest secrets of the inner struggle against evil – demons and passions such as jealousy, anger, pride, adultery, greed, grief, ambition, and others.²³

In the inner struggle against evil, which is made up of demons and human passions, special means and methods are required, which are primarily fasting and prayer. Fasting is required to restrain the man's passion and prayer to conquer the inner evil with the power of God, because without God, the man with his own powers cannot cope with the inner evil. Repentance and confession are also necessary “means” to overcome the inner evil. Therefore, there is no love in this “battlefield” and for that enemy (evil). Christians seek love for a man, even for the enemy but not for the eternal and the biggest enemy of the human –Satan. On the contrary, absolute hatred should be cultivated for him.

The goal of Christian life is the salvation of the soul, return to the Heavenly Father and eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven, as well as to enter the kingdom of God. St. Seraphim of Sarov argues that the goal of Christian life is winning the Holy Spirit. How is this connected then? Unlike the Roman Catholic ethics that is based on the doctrine of justification by doing good, in Orthodoxy it is required to convert the soul, to deal with the inner passions and sins, and for this, the force of the Holy Spirit is necessary. The imperative for Christians is that in the inner spiritual life, they uncompromisingly strive for moral perfection, and the failure in that sense is their weakness or sin.

Difference between Man and Evil in Man

In the Orthodox tradition, there is a distinction between “man” and “evil”, “man” and “evil in man” do not equate as in some philosophical concepts. Making this difference has important concrete implications, especially when it comes to confronting evil. The man created in the image and likeness of God is created good – “God has made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions” (Eccl. 7, 29), “because we are His offspring born to do good deeds”, and a man by his own choice turns evil.

What does it mean to struggle against evils of his being and achieve victory over them? The original Christian idea is that evil does not overcome evil. Evil has its own methods and means that are evil and the good has its good roads and methods, good means. According to the Orthodox viewpoint, the least evil is in its germ from evil, the devil; but the least good is from the good, from God. Therefore, the devil's view is that sin overcomes sin, evil overcomes evil, insult overcomes insult, injustice overcomes injustice and vice overcomes vice. Christian-orthodox view is that no one needs to return evil for evil or avenge. The good should oppose evil, meekness anger, gentleness cruelty,

²³ St. John of the Ladder, *Ladder*, Hilandar Monastery, 1997

love hatred, forgiveness revenge and virtue vice. Christ's teaching is that only the good truly prevails the evil, that the good should oppose the evil.

About Christian Love

What is the unique weapon in the fight against evil that Christ offers, which cannot be defended, and which can help achieve that inner transformation of evil? It is love, Christian love – spiritual love. Spiritual love is different from both *physical attraction* and *mental love* such as sympathy, empathy, sentimentality. Spiritual love means loving God, selfsacrifice, compassion and brotherly love, care for the salvation of souls.²⁴ The Christian moral life is determined by the motive of love, the love of God and the love of neighbor.

“The mysterious process of blooming good and transformation of evil is naturally accomplished with love and not coercion, and evil should be counteracted for love and through love”²⁵, says Ilin. True love never forces a man because forced love is not love. If evil were fighting evil, evil would be doubled, that is why in Christianity, confronting the good with the evil is required.

In addition, achieving good at the level of social life implies action of justice. At the level of personal life, a Christian is called to suffer injustice. “The measure of Christian patience also shows the measure of his perfections. At the level of social life, however, a Christian is not allowed to accept and suffer injustice his neighbor is exposed to. Christian love that at the level of personal life imposes withdrawal and tolerance, at the level of social life requires courage and resistance to injustice”.²⁶

External measures, violence and forceful restraint cannot substantially overcome evil. “No violence, even the physical destruction of the bearers of evil, essentially and substantively destroys a single atom of evil: evil in its essence is destroyed only by the good, the graceful power of love, as the darkness vanishes only when the light beams it”.²⁷ With such a reaction, the one who does evil is encouraged to overcome the inner evil, evil inside oneself, and then its external implementation.

The question now is what happens when the inner evil turns into external actions? Does this mean that criminals should be allowed to freely do evil? If the fundamental struggle to overcome evil takes place in the man's inner being, does that mean that criminals should be allowed to freely manifest their inner evil in the form of external crimes? If we have showed that evil cannot be substantially overcome by forcing or compulsion, does that mean that coercion should be totally discarded? According to the Orthodox viewpoint, is it permissible to oppose evil with physical force and prevention?

²⁴ E. V. Sectorsky, *Christian Ethics*, Brotherhood of St. Simeon Mirotočivi, Vrnjačka Banja 1999, 81-82.

²⁵ I. Ilyin, *On resistance to Evil by Force*, 19

²⁶ G. Mandzaridis, *Sociology of Christianity*, the Christian Cultural Center, Belgrade, 2004, 221

²⁷ Frank Simon, *Light in the Darkness*, 148

Difference between Violence and Force

To answer this question, it is crucial to define the term *violence*²⁸. Not distinguishing the meaning of the terms “force” and “violence” is more than common in the colloquial and theoretical use of those terms. Many languages do not make any difference between them. In German, the term Gewalt is used to denote both force and violence, etc.²⁹ The terms commonly used in the Serbian language are “force”, “forcing”, “compelling”, “violence”, “coercion”.

Here are some of the established definitions of violence: “Violence is the relationship through which the body or life of people is harmed or things are damaged”,³⁰ “Violence is a conscious use of physical force to cause injury or physical destruction ... to satisfy the anger, achieve revenge, confirm pride, create fear in other”; “Violence is an extreme form of aggression with the illegitimate or unjustified use of physical or psychological force”,³¹ “Violence is the action with the use of force, in order to create a certain situation or relationship in the society, leading to the accomplishment of the goals and interests of those who commit violence, and against the will and interests of those participants in the interaction who are exposed to violence”³². All violence is the action by force, concrete, direct or indirect (of its latent potency).

A good example of how much vagueness the lack of distinction between *force* and *violence*, or *coercion* and *violence* brings is the article of K. K. Ihar, “In defense of one version of pacifism”, stressing that he “will use the word ‘violence’ without further explanation, although it is sufficiently obvious that the need exists. I hope that my presentation will not lose much in its validity if I circumvent this difficulty here”.

In contrast to the attitude of Karl Marx that “demonization of the term and concept of violence is a big theoretical misconception and practical danger”, we believe that if any action by force is called, or subsumed under the concept of *violence*, then it is “great theoretical misconception and practical danger”. We share the view according to which in the Serbian language the word “violence” has a negative sign, where negative, not neutral meaning of the term *violence* is especially clearly expressed.³³ The term

²⁸ Babić Jovan, “Pacifism”, *Moral and our time*, Official Gazette, Belgrade 2005, 205; D. Dulić and B. Romčević, *Ethics of War*, Chrestomathy, Belgrade University – Faculty of Security, Belgrade, 2010, 21

²⁹ D. Simeunović, *Political Violence*, 7

³⁰ One of the most common definitions of violence, which is taken as the official in the political jargon and political theory in U.S., D. Simeunović, *Political Violence*, 7

³¹ Z. Šeparović, “Violence and Victims”, *Pogledi*, 1/84, 70-71

³² D. Simeunović, “Violence”, *Political encyclopedia*, 732

³³ In the Serbian medieval writings, the word “violence” is used in a negative context, without exception. “All that gained by wisdom and efforts, which was ruined by *violence* (italics B.G.), from his grandfather, and that belonged to him from the Serbian land”. *Old Serbian biographies*; translated and explained by M. Bašić, Publishing Library Geca Kon, Belgrade 1930, 4; “Diocletia and Dalmatia, his homeland and birth, his true grandfather’s land, who suffered *violence* (italics B.G.) from the Greek race ...”, Domentian, *Life of St. Sava and St. Simeon*, translated by L. Mirković, SKZ, Belgrade 1938, 240

Emphasizing renewal of paternal grandfather’s land of Stefan Nemanja, Sveti Sava writes “... all this had belonged to him of the Serbian lands, and once been taken away by violence from his grandfather”, Saint Sava, *Collected Works*, edited and translated by „S. Jovanović, SKZ, Belgrade 1998, 148-149

In the prayer of St. Sava after meeting Strezo: “Look, Master, *violence* (italics B.G.) of those who wage war against your people, who love thy magnificent name”. Domentian, *Life of St. Sava and St. Simeon*, 106

For the Hungarian King Andrew II, Domentijan writes: “The king did much *violence* (italics B.G.) against the country of his fatherland...”, Domentian, *Life of St. Sava and St. Simeon*, 253

“violence” is mentioned 29 times in the Holy Scripture, always in a negative context, with a negative sign and in the Old Testament only, while in the New Testament it was not used at all.³⁴ The term *violence* is used in the sense of evil, anarchy, disorder, irrationality, injustice and so on.

We believe that it is necessary to distinguish between *coercion* and *violence*, because the word “violence” has a negative sign, a negative assessment. Violence is acting arbitrarily, unreasonably, disgusting, a “violator” is someone who crosses the boundaries of the permissible, attacks and oppresses – oppressor and enemy. One should protest against the “violence”, fight against it; in any case a man subjected to violence is humiliated, oppressed, deserves compassion and support. To prove “permissibility” or “legality” of violence means to prove “permissibility of impermissible” or “legality of unlawful”; realistically, spiritually and logically proven – immediately proves to be affectively rejected and controversial: the wrong term divides the soul and hides its evidence”,³⁵ Russian religious philosopher Ilin correctly noticed.

Therefore, in this paper, the term “forcing” is used in a positive way, morally permissible, the “use of force” in a neutral way, while the term “violence” is used to indicate the use of force that should be morally condemned, and which comes from an evil motive or encourages evil. To highlight the use of force that is not to be condemned, which comes from good intentions and encourages the good, out of the possible expressions in the Serbian language – “coercion”, “compelling” and others, we will use the term “forcing” – enforced use of force to a human being. As in the root of the word is “force” instead of “necessity”, “compulsion” or else. If there is no difference between *violence* and *forcing*, the issue is covered up and there is a situation, that, firstly, violence is pulled from moral and value evaluations, and then, each use of force is called the same. This identifies the evildoer and the hero, or one that uses force for hate, revenge, interest to the one who does so for moral reasons – for duty, love, the offender and righteous, the bully and the victim. Any use of force is not in itself neither good nor evil, but *violence* is always evil, morally incorrect and unjustified.³⁶

In the Service of King Milutin by Danilo II, it is written: “Most Reverend and divine thy prayers; faithful to pray, to save your homeland; from overwhelming poverty and *violence* (italics B.G) of the wicked Agarenes... ”*Srbljak, Services, Canons, Akathists*, SKZ, Belgrade 1970, 89

Handing the throne over to his brother Milutin, King Dragutin says: “... in the long life, reign and defend your homeland from *violence* (italics B.G.) of those who wage war against you”. Archbishop Danilo II, *Lives of Serbian kings and archbishops*, 24

³⁴ Here are just a few examples from Holy Scripture: Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the Lord and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I done *violence*? Whom have I done wrong? (1 Samuel 12, 3); Destroy, O Lord, divide their tongues; for I see *violence* and strife in the city. (Psalm 55, 9); Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth *mischief* by a law? (Psalm 94, 20); Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the mouth of the wicked conceals *violence*. The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals *violence*. (Proverbs 10, 6, 11); From the fruit of his mouth a man eats what is good, but the desire of the treacherous is for *violence* (Proverbs 13, 2); If one is burdened with the blood of another, he will be a fugitive until death; let no one help him. (Proverbs 28, 17); For *oppression* makes a wise man mad, and a bribe corrupts the heart (Ecclesiastes 7,7);

³⁵ I. Ilyin, *On resistance to Evil by Force*, 24

³⁶ This is a true statement of the Russian Orthodox philosopher I. Ilyin: “Modern people have lost a living sense of good and evil, they accept perversion as an act of art, low intrigue as a manifestation of intelligence, cruelty as a heroic will, unnatural utopia as a global world “program”. Our contemporaries have forgotten precious axioms of politics, law, government and the states. They “canceled” the devil, to surrender and give them to him”. I. Ilyin *The Way to Insight*, BRIMO, Belgrade 2001, 106

Emphasizing the distinction between *forcing* and *violence*, I. Ilin, said: “Forcing is the imposition of will upon the internal or external human being, which is not directly focused on the spiritual seeing through a forced soul or on its acceptance in love, but tries to force it to do something or prevent its action”³⁷. “Forcing” is the use of force, which is lawful, legal, moral, spiritual, meaningful, balanced, reasonable, and which is used to compel somebody to perform some action or prevent somebody’s action. By *violence*, we mean illegal (unlawful), anti-moral, anti-spiritual, excessive, illegitimate, unjustified use of force by which somebody is compelled to perform some action or somebody’s action is prevented.

A man can force himself (self-forcing)³⁸ but people can also force each other. How is forcing performed? By acting on the motives of behavior (order, prohibition, threat and boycott) and directly on the human body (injury, tying and murder). There are psychological and physical coercion.³⁹ Physical coercion of man by another man is not evil in itself because nothing external is neither good nor evil in itself, it may be just a manifestation of the internal good or evil. The amputation of the leg need not imply envy, revenge, lust for power and evil, but good intentions to save the life of a man. If self-forcing is not effective, if one cannot control oneself and if the external psychological pressure proves to be insufficient or unconvincing, what remains is a physical action on another person against his will –forcing.

Why is forcing necessary? Because a man is not alone in the world –if so, in the Aristotelian sense, he would be either God or beast – but a member of the community and using crime he violates or attempts to destroy other people's freedom of choice. When a man is forced, it is not for the reason of being hostile to him personally, but to save what is for every community and man most precious of all – the freedom of choice and the freedom of individuals as members of the community. Only sentimental, biased, blind, pacifist consciousness is not able to distinguish between *coercion* directed against criminals and *violence* backed by obvious evil directed against anyone.

Thus, the question is whether from the Orthodox point of view it is permissible to oppose evil with physical force and prevention. On this basic question – whether in a spiritual sense it is allowed to oppose evil with both physical force and prevention, coercion, or, with righteous force, I. Ilin responds positively if these basic requirements are met: if there is true evil, and evil is not an illusion; if evil is undoubtedly noticed; then, if there is a love of good; will in the soul of the one who opposes evil, and, finally, if necessary, its practical prevention. Then not only that it is permissible, but also necessary to prevent evil with physical forcing, or righteous force, knowingly accepting danger, suffering, and even death.⁴⁰

³⁷ I. Ilyin, *On resistance to Evil by Force*, 20.

³⁸ When something is learned by heart.

³⁹ In this sense, distinction can be made in politics between *political coercion* and *political violence*. *Political coercion* implies illegal (unlawful), immoral, antispiritual (meaningless), excessive, illegitimate and improper use of physical or mental force, which does not allow or prevent the commission of one's political activity. On the other hand, *political violence* means use of force in politics, which is lawful, legal, moral, spiritual, balanced, reasonable, and which compels to commitment or prevents one's activity. “The makers of government coercion and prevention do not require evil but impartiality, they do not need hate but restrained spiritual balance, not vengeance, but justice”, said Ilyin.

⁴⁰ If five basic requirements are satisfied, as follows: 1) If this is a real evil, not something that looks like evil (weakness, error, omission, accident, illness), or, if there is evil human will, fierce, aggressive, wicked, shameless, which is manifested as an external force. If released into the external action and do not stop before any means. 2) If there is a real perception of evil, it must be observed first, his internal action examined and his last, hidden malice seen through. Should or should not a criminal be physically obstructed, the only competent person to judge about this is the

Love of Good is Stronger than Fear of Sin

It is necessary to distinguish *essential overcoming of evil* from *protecting the world from evil*. It is a tension between the spiritual task of Christians and their moral perfection. The question is whether one can deviate from the moral perfection and stay on the path of Christ and if that means only weakness, wickedness. Can the personal righteousness and perfection be put aside for the sake of general and higher good? It is a relationship between right and necessary.⁴¹ What to do if the dilemma the man faces does not offer a righteous and ideal way out, if it does not objectively exist, but because of necessity, one must act unfairly?

If there is true evil that turns into external evil actions, and if it is opposed with physical force and arms, what those who are opposed to the criminals in this fight do is not perfect, or holy or righteous actions. However, as they cannot be absolutely justified, they cannot be absolutely condemned, because the armed struggle in itself is not either absolutely incorrect and unjust, or the action “most noble and divine”. Therefore, Christians must make a spiritual (moral) compromise: knowingly, freely and voluntarily accept morally unjust way out as a spiritual necessity and responsibility for the unfair treatment. An Orthodox Christian must do what is necessary, aware and ready to bear the burden of what is not at the same time just, righteous.

Joining the armed struggle can be not because of the subjective weakness, but because of the objective and socio-historical necessity; as for a soldier, or a participant in the armed struggle, it does not necessarily mean his weakness but, on the contrary, manifestation of subjective power. Therefore, what is morally imperfect is not always practically forbidden, and it is not forbidden where objectively fair way out is impossible.

There is a perception within the Orthodox that the opposition to evil by force of arms is not a sin, where it is objectively necessary, i.e., where it is the only or the least unfair way out because the opposition to evil is always a matter of good, justice and duty. As an argument why morally imperfect process need not be a sin at the same time we can state that sin means decline, failure, falling away in the direction of subjectively chosen evil, conscious personal service to evil. Our view is different from the above, as we believe that a sin can be committed out of the best intentions. Thus, to prevent the abomination, a Christian should use all necessary means, including murder, knowingly accepting it as unfair but necessary way and taking the sin on his conscience. At a personal level, he is bound to be uncompromisingly guided by the principle of personal moral perfection, however, in relation to his neighbors and in confronting the evil of the

one who has looked at and felt real bad, experiencing it, but is not infected, has received but did not accept it. Many people, fearing in advance of the necessity of physical confronting evil, turn away from it as if they did not see it. 3) The existence of true love for the good in the soul of the one who asks and resolves to oppose evil. Therefore, only identifying difference between good and evil is not enough, because if this difference is even identified, one can remain indifferent to it. Therefore, in order to counter the evil, it is necessary to feel true love for the good that is in danger. 4) The existence of the will to act, except live love, commitment to act is also required, and not just within the own personality, but also on the mental-spiritual life and mentalphysical activity of others. Alive and healthy mind cannot help but participate on the side of the good, cannot help but love, resolve, make effort, helping the good and preventing evil. 5) When it turns out that other ways and means cannot deter another man from doing evil, and when they feel that the physical action is necessary and practically the only tool in given circumstances, or that the man is left with only two options: either lenient inaction or physical confrontation, restriction of the will of wrongdoers. I. Ilyin, *On resistance to Evil by Force*, 47-53

⁴¹ See: J. Babić, “Right and necessary: an essay on the defense”, *Annual of Philosophy*, 24/2011

world, he cannot be guided by this principle, but rather the principle of maximum effectiveness and efficiency of his struggle against the evil of the world.⁴²

3. About murder in armed conflicts

About murder

Unfortunately, we are contemporaries of euphoric exultation of the current world's powerful people after murder of political and military enemies. They do not only principally justify violence and murders committed in order to achieve their political and geo-strategic objectives, but they also openly boast their deeds about which their powerful "media" inform the world. What is then the thing that makes the Christian Orthodox attitude so much different from those mentioned above, who also call themselves Christians?

Armed conflicts are those that are considered the most difficult situations in a human life, especially for a Christian, first because of moral reasons because he has to kill a human being. Can an Orthodox soldier fully justify himself for the murder of a man in armed conflicts? Is killing of a man in war morally admissible for Orthodox Church? Can the commandment "do not kill" be applied in armed conflicts? These are probably the issues that are confronted to Christian conscience in the strictest possible way, and we are particularly interested in the Orthodox.

Although an exceptional social circumstance, war is not the situation that frees Christians from the commandment "do not kill", i.e., it is not a situation in which the commandment can be violated without consequence.⁴³ In principle, it cannot reduce the sphere of validity of the Christian commandments. The commandment "do not kill" applies unconditionally, in fact universally. It comes from the Christian doctrine of Creation, according to which God created man in His own image, that one can not claim what is God's, that is, one cannot give himself the right to take the life of another man, since giving and taking of human life are in the hands of God.

We will consider the way in which killing in armed conflicts is treated in the Scriptures and the Orthodox tradition, by the Holy Fathers, that is in the canons. Firstly, how the killing in general is seen, then killing in armed conflicts, and secondly, how the repentance is prescribed for the killing in general and how for the killing in armed conflict and, ultimately, how to treat the murder committed by clerics, monks and laity (believers).

In the *New Testament*, Christ does not only reminiscent of the Old Testament commandment "do not kill" (2 Matthew 20, 13): "You have heard what were the old ones told: "Thou shalt not kill, for he who kills shall be guilty of the court" (Matthew 5, 21), but He also forbids even insults and being angry with one's neighbor" (Matthew 5, 22).

⁴² S. Frank, *Light in the Darkness*, 46

⁴³ It is interesting how Isaac Asiel, chief rabbi of the Republic of Serbia, interprets this order: "In the Decalogue (2 Moses 20, 13), there is the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill', lo Tyre in Hebrew, which means 'do not commit the crime of murder'. We are talking about the crime of murder and, therefore, the verb lircoah is used, not laarog, which means to kill", *Military and Religion*, NIC "Vojska", Belgrade, 2000, 150

We will reconstruct the views of the Holy Fathers on the murder, contained in canonical provisions, from the church canons, that is the rules of the Orthodox Church⁴⁴, which was published in *Athens Phrases* in 1852-1859, best edition and the most complete collections of canons of the first 10 centuries of *Nomocanon in 14 titles*, translated into Serbian by Nicodemus Milas, called *Rule of the Orthodox Church with the Interpretations*⁴⁵. Also, we will compare them with the latest translation of church canons, that was, with new explanations and interpretations translated by Herzegovinian retired Bishop Athanasius (Jevtić), called *The Sacred Canons of the Church*⁴⁶.

There are more standards in the church canons about murder – rules of the Orthodox Church⁴⁷, as well as their interpretations by Aleksey Aristin⁴⁸. There are distinctions in the canons between intentional – deliberate murder⁴⁹, almost intentional⁵⁰ and unintentional⁵¹ – accidental murder⁵², which are listed and explained in detail. Therefore, compliance with commandment "do not kill" does not refer only to the physical fact of murder, deprivation of life, but also includes a motive or intention. V. Solovyov once said: "In the act of murder, the evil is not in the physical fact of one's life deprivation, but in the moral cause of the fact – the evil will of the one who kills".

Having in mind the intention with which the murder has been committed, as well as the person who has committed it (cleric or layman) various sanctions are foreknown in church canons and they appear in form of epitimia (kind of punishment).⁵³ According to Orthodox attitude, epitimia involves certain measures to be taken by padre (priest) against repentant sinner (no matter if he receives forgiveness of sins or not) with principle aim to make him heal spiritually and not repeat the sin. It means that epitimia is not a

⁴⁴ Rules of the Orthodox Church, or written provisions that the Church adopted over the centuries, include: the rules of the Apostles (85 canons), seven ecumenical councils (190 canons), ten local councils (321 canons), rules of thirteen Holy Fathers (147 canons) and rules that can be supplemented.

⁴⁵ N. Milas, *Rules of Orthodox Church with Interpretations*, I-II, A. Pajević library, Novi Sad, 1895

⁴⁶ *Sacred Canons of the Church*, translated from Greek and Slavonic by Athanasius, retired Bishop of Herzegovina, The Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Belgrade University, The Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral, Belgrade, 2005

⁴⁷ These are: 66th rule of the Apostles, 91st Rule of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Trulski); 22nd and 23rd Rule of Saint Local Council in Ancyra; 8th, 11th, 13th, 43rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, and 57th Basil the Great rule (from the Epistle of St. Basil the Great addressed to Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium, and Diodorus, and some others) and 15th and 16th Rule of Basil the Great (from the letter of 26th rule in short about time [punishment] for co-sinners) and 4th Rule of St. Gregory of Nyssa.

⁴⁸ Alexis Aristin is one of the most important interpreters of church canons, he lived in the twelfth century, and his interpretations are a significant portion of *St. Sava's Nomocanon*.

⁴⁹ (ank. 22; Basil the Great 8; Gregory of Nyssa 5)

⁵⁰ (Basil the Great 8; Gregory of Nyssa 5)

⁵¹ The quote from *St. Sava's Zakonopravilo* kept the term "unintentionally"

⁵² (ank. 22; Basil the Great. 8; Gregory of Nyssa 5)

⁵³ Confessors - bishops and priests (presbyters) are entitled, which by the apostolic succession comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, to forgive or retain sins of those who repent: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven, and whose you retain, they are retained" (John 20, 23). As some sins to confess, due to the weight, are not for "dismissal", confessors can determine the penance. It is important when, where, how much and what kind of penance is determined, like for the soul of the penitent it can be devastating not giving any spiritual medicine (which usually happens), so may be giving too strong doses. As the doctor would be guilty and responsible for the death of his patient, he either did not give him any drug, or give him a drug that does not match his illness (too weak or too strong), except the priest's responsibility is even greater and worse if the soul prevails the body. What can be ordered as penance? For example, it may be moving away of the sinner from church community and public prayer, Holy Communion ban for some time, which is most frequently the most serious penance, additional fasting and domestic prayers, prostrations (small and large gifts), reading religious books, alms-giving, visiting sacred sites and other souluseful actions. As for more serious sins, such as murder, adultery, witchcraft, it may be decided on the Holy Communion ban for a few years.

punishment but means which should evoke conscience and stimulate repentance with the one who committed the sin.

Let us see first the way in which intentional murder is treated in Orthodox tradition and which sanctions are foreknown in case it is committed by a laic. There are significant differences among the holy Fathers, i.e. church Council decisions, about this issue. They start from the one that the murderer should be “expelled” from Church⁵⁴ forever; through taking away the sinner’s right to Holy Communion till the end of his life⁵⁵, up to the one suggesting 20⁵⁶ or 10 years long epitimia⁵⁷. In case the murder has been committed by a cleric, regardless of its being intentional or unintentional, church canons foreknow his undoing (degrading).

Murder in armed conflicts⁵⁸

There are two distinguished attitudes towards murder in armed conflicts in Orthodox tradition – the attitudes of Athanasius the Great and Basil the Great. There is enormous difference between these two attitudes and it is questionable whose attitude has been applied more often in history of the Church. The main difference can be seen in the fact that St. Athanasius does not at all treat a murder in war as a murder; furthermore, he emphasizes that such murder deserves praise, while St. Basil, on the contrary, qualifies a murder in war as intentional murder and he recommends three-year-epitimia for soldiers.

⁵⁴ The Rules of the Apostles, or the collection of canons which were called *Apostolic Canons*, which were created during the first centuries of the history of the Church, in 66th rule it is written: “The killer priest – to be exposed, if an ordinary person – to decide”, followed in the interpretation by the statement: “If the priest hits someone in the fight and with one blow kills to the death – to be exposed for his cruelty and if the layman – to be decided”. N. Milaš, *Rules of Orthodox Church with Interpretations*, I, 148,135-136

⁵⁵ Strictest penalties for intentionally killing are provided in the rules of the First Local Council in Ankyra: “He who deliberately committed the murder at the end of life is worthy of the Communion”. This means that the penalty for this sin is – life penance. The interpretation of this rule is as follows: “The one who deliberately killed a man, shall regret all the time of his life, and at the end of life, or at the outcome of the soul, to be worthy of the finale and do the holy communion with the divine sanctities”. The 23th rule of the Local Council in Ankyra, the one who unintentionally commit murdered is threatened with 5 year penance: “Whoever commits murder unintentionally, 5 years to repent”. Ancyra’s Council is the first local council, which means all the concerned Metropolitan Bishops were required to participate in this council, held in Ancyra in Galatia, in 314. This Council was attended by 18 bishops of Asia Minor and Syria, chaired by the Bishop of Antioch, Vitaly. 25 canons were issued at the Council, half of which deals with the conditions under which the Church may receive the clergy and laity who have renounced their faith during the persecution of the Church in 305, and Canons 11, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 apply to certain moral transgressions of the faithful, including the murder. N. Milaš, *Rules of Orthodox Church with Interpretations*, I, 22 *Zakonopravilo*, 204; Rule 22

⁵⁶ 56th Rule says: “Whoever intentionally kills, to receive 20 years of punishment, and who unintentionally kills – 10 years...”. *Zakonopravilo*, 531; In 26 rules of Basil the Great” in short about time [punishment] for co-sinners”, 15th Rule says: “Whoever intentionally kills – 20 years to repent”, 16th Rule says: “Who unintentionally kills – 12 years to repent and cleric not to be. *Ibid*, 548

⁵⁷ The aforementioned 4th Rule of St. Gregory of Nyssa states: “He who wishes to atone wilful murder, ten years to be deprived from the Church ... A person who has committed unintentional murder – if the cleric, to be rejected by the grace, that is to be deprived of the sacred ministry, and if the layman, punishment for him to be the same as for the fornicator who committed plain fornication with women and not with the animal or with male fornicator. And the time is reduced with the warmth and effort to repentance”. The same father, St. Gregory of Nyssa, in the 5th Rule states: “If the decided gets sick before the end of punishment time, to do Holy Communion if on the point of death. And if gets better, has to wait for the determined time, staying on the degree before Communion”. *Zakonopravilo*, 583

⁵⁸ See: Grozdić B., “Nomokanon of St. Sava Concerning Murder in the War”, *Theoria* 4, 2010

The attitude of St. Athanasius the Great⁵⁹, which can be found in his epistle to the monk Amon (Egypt) verbatim goes like this: “Likewise many other things that happen in life, we find the difference depending on the very situation: killing is not allowed, but killing the enemies in war is both legal and worthy of praise. That is why those who stand out in war deserve the highest honor and they are monumentalized, thus affirming their famous deeds”.⁶⁰ There is not even mentioning or idea of considering it to be a sin, so what is that makes this attitude a Christian one then, and how it differs from a pagan, heathenish one?

St. Basil the Great⁶¹ writes about the same topic in a very different way. First of all, he believes that killing in armed conflicts is intentional or, translated into contemporary legal terminology, it is premeditated murder since there is not the slightest doubt that the murder is committed in order to frighten the enemy and “lead him to the right path”.⁶² St. Basil the Great recommends: “It seems to me that our forefathers didn’t consider the murders as something to be treated like defending of modesty and honor. That is why it would be good to recommend to those, since their hands are not clean, to forebear from Communion for three years”.⁶³

While interpreting this rule, Aristis emphasizes that neither St. Basil totally rejects “judgment”, attitude, opinion of Athanasius the Great according to whom murder in war is not a murder (killing of an opponent in war is “a legal and worthy of praise act”), „since a brave man kills in war because of being smart and orthodox). Orthodox means the right Christian faith or Orthodoxy. However, it is good for those who killed in war for the above mentioned reasons not to take Communion for three years because their hands are not clean. The rule only says that „If a soldier kills in war for right faith”, so it means that epitimia reduced in this way does not apply for the murders in war committed for some other reasons.

It is clear from this interpretation that three-year-epitimia is applied only in case of the brave ones, in case of those who kill their opponents in war „because of being smart and

⁵⁹ St. Athanasius the Great, the great defender of the purity of Orthodoxy, the Archbishop of Alexandria, invincible defender of the Orthodox Nicene confession of faith in the Holy Trinity and one of the greatest theologians of the Church of Christ of all time, which is why he has been called “the Great”, “Father of Orthodoxy”, “pillar of the Church”, “great trumpet of Truth”, “the incomparable fighter on the front line”. “He was born in Alexandria, in 296, the Greek Christian family. As a deacon of the Archbishop of Alexandria, he participated in the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, and had a zeal for learning and orthodoxy. He particularly contributed to combating the Arian heresy. He governed the Alexandrian Church from 312 to 326 year. The saint is commemorated on May 2 and January 18.

⁶⁰ N. Milaš, *Rules of Orthodox Church with Interpretations*, II, 330. Bishop Athanasius (Jevtić) translates this attitude as follows: “For as in other matters, which are in life, we find the difference in how they are. “As (for example) it is not allowed to kill, but killing enemies in war is both lawful and worthy of praise, because the best in the war are greatly honored, and monuments are erected to them showing their exploits. So the same thing, for something and in some time is not permitted and, in something, and in appropriate time is allowed and permitted”, *The Sacred Canons of the Church*, 447

⁶¹ According to 8th Rule of St. Basil the Great: “He who pulls the ax at a woman – he is a deliberate killer. Whoever throws a stone at a dog, hits man, and one who, to punish, whip with the struck or the rod – is the unintentional killer. A person who, wrathful, using wood or hand strikes someone in the place of death and kills, is near the willful murderer. One who, having drawn a sword or knife, hits someone is a real deliberate killer. And the thief, and the enemy and the one who for any other reason gives poison – if he kills is a deliberate killer. Women who give child destroying grass, and those who use them, are willful murderers”, *Ibid*, I, 505

⁶² “However, it is quite deliberate, and it is not subject to any doubt, what is done by bandits or in time of enemy wars, because they kill for the money, hiding from the court, and these in wars commit murders with the resolute intention, not to frighten or cause anyone to the right path, but to kill opponents”. N. Milaš, *Rules of Orthodox Church with Interpretations*, I, 360. In the translation of Bishop Athanasius (Jevtić) this paragraph reads as follows: “And again, it is intentional (offense), and without any doubt, such is the (attack) from bandits in time of war invasions. For they kill for money, avoiding (each) control, and they come into the war for murder, neither to intimidate nor to bring to reason, but with a public purpose to kill opponents”, *The Sacred Canons of the Church*, 464

⁶³ N. Milaš, *Rules of Orthodox Church with Interpretations*, I, 367

orthodox”, but not in case of cowards, not for those who do that for fear, revenge, mugging, the ones who kill prisoners, the weak ones, and all that can be called *not being smart*. A murder becomes evil only when it is committed because of hatred for a man, when it is committed because of malice, envy, greed, but not when a person kills fighting and sacrificing his own life for others, for justice, for truth.

Critics on account of St. Basil’s attitude appeared very early and they emphasized that three-year-epitimia of Communion is „too difficult for a soldier“ because it can happen, due to often war waging, that he cannot take Communion till the end of his life. Obviously favoring attitude of St. Athanasius, Zonara⁶⁴ thinks that it is acceptable to forgive the soldiers killing in war because they are “defenders of the whole smartness and Faith; if we let Barbarians (=Non-Christians) overpower, there won’t be either annunciation or virtue“. Zonara and Valsmaon⁶⁵ state that the advice given by Basil the Great has not been applied at all, but the already mentioned attitude of Athanasius the Great has been applied as criterion.

Recent considerations, among them the one given by I. Ilin, support the idea that the attitude of Athanasius the Great is correct but, in order to avoid internal inconsistency, I. Ilin emphasizes the 13th rule given by Basil the Great which defines depth and wisdom of enlightenment, because “murder in war is commendable, but it surely requires spiritual purification“. This philosopher thinks that the attitude of Basil the Great has not died out in orthodoxy but it has been saved in spirit and tradition, and it would be very important and beneficial for this tradition to be renewed and reestablished in modern Orthodox Church tradition. However, Ilin does not support three-year-long ban on communion, but he supports church legally regulated repentance, which will ultimately be done by a whole nation and especially by soldiers.⁶⁶

Clerics in War

Since the clerics who kill are to be undone (degraded), war is not a situation that can free a cleric of that sanction. Irrespectively of the circumstances in which a cleric kills a man, he has to be undone. A cleric has to lose his cleric title, regardless of the circumstances that cause killing of a human being. The essence is in the fact that he *has shed human blood*, no matter what circumstances caused the blood, and that is something that is incompatible with the service a cleric does since the core point of his service is bloodless sacrifice in the Eucharist secret.

In this way, a pacifistic attitude of treating a murder committed by clerics has been preserved in orthodox tradition. Christ’s commandment to his pupil, Apostle Peter: “Return thy sword to its place; for all those who take the sword shall perish by the sword” seems as if had been present through the whole history of Church until nowadays. Contemporary Christian military clerics in the world armies do not carry weapons and it is very impermissible for them to do any form of violence.

It is a fact that there have been clerks in history who have taken part in wars and killed their enemies, but they have not been denied from doing cleric service. In Serbian history we can find examples of clerics who took part in armed conflicts, such as archbishop Danilo II who participated in defense of Hilandar against Catalans, St. Peter of Cetinja who

⁶⁴ John Zonaras (1081-1118) is one of the three most important interpreters of church canons (Aristin, Zonaras, Valsamon), except that he does not limit himself to interpreting the meaning of canons, but is seeking for motives the canon was passed, harmonizes them, in the conflict of canons on the same issue prefers some over the others, etc.

⁶⁵ Theodore Valsamon (1143–1180) third interpreter of canons

⁶⁶ I. Ilyin, *On resistance to Evil by Force*, 145

opposed Turks, priest Luka Lazarević in the first Serbian Uprising against Turks, priest (later vojvoda) Momcilo Đujić who was fighting as member of the Yugoslav Army commanded by Colonel Dragoslav Draža Mihajlović and many others; and some of them left the priest service while the others did not.

Having in mind use of violence, a question could be asked about the way in which clerics, monks and laics should act in self-defense and how in case lives of their loved were endangered? We think that the orthodox attitude by which use of physical force for all Christians in order to defend their beloved ones, regardless of their service in church is not only allowed but it is their obligation and duty. In case that a cleric decides to carry and use weapons in order to defend his beloved ones, he consciously waives his further priestly service.

Since monks, deciding on that life path and service, waive this world, they can consistently adhere Christ's attitude that they need not respond to violence by violence even if their lives are endangered. Following Christ's example, they can sacrifice themselves; they can die without use of force, without using weapons or killing in self-defense. An example for that is what monks in the Monastery of Zograf did when the holy object Holly Hill was attacked by Catalans in Middle Ages. The monks did not offer physical resistance, but they closed themselves in Pirga (tower) ready to be killed without offering physical resistance. The robbers set fire to the tower and all the monks suffered martyrdom.

Accordingly, we consider being true the deep orthodox attitude by which murder of a man is always a sin and every man who killed committed a sin and he is an assassin, regardless of the circumstances and motives. The motives can be unselfish, the act can be motivated by love to thy loved and it can be struggle against obvious evil. Even in armed conflicts, fighting on absolutely just side, if a soldier kills his enemy he must rise above the tragic paradox, accept his act as a sin and repent.

4. Orthodoxy and traditions of opinions dominating the ethics of war and peace

If we tried to subsume the orthodox point of view under one of the traditional opinions dominating ethics of war and peace – *realism*, *pacifism* or *just war theory*, we would come to surprising results. If we have shown so far that orthodoxy is not exclusively pacifistic, but that it is in that sense layered, then it can be intuitively concluded that the orthodox attitude can be, without any doubts, subsumed under just war theory, the tradition whose origin can be found in ancient philosophy as well as in teaching of the early (St. Augustine's) and medieval church.

When the ethics attitude toward war is concerned, there is obvious difference between Rome-catholic and orthodox attitude. Christian attitudes toward war are usually classified as: *pacifism*, *just war* and *crusade* and they chronologically appear in that order.⁶⁷ It is generally known that just war theory has been developed within Rome-catholicism starting from St. Augustine, then Thomas Aquinas, Vitorio. Suarez, Grotius, Pufendorf, Wolf, Vattel up to contemporary theologians and thinkers. According to Rome-catholic understanding, if the conditions *ius ad bello* (just cause, reason – *ius cause*, competent authority and public announcement, proper intention, limited targets, ultimate means, possibility for success) are fulfilled, war is not only allowed but it is also just, and

⁶⁷ Bainton Roland, *Christian Attitudes towards War and Peace* – Historical review and critical considerations, Alfa and Omega, Belgrade, 1995, 12

participating in the war is morally justified. „It is commendable to wage a just war“, T. Aquinas claims. It follows from the words that the act of killing of someone who is dangerous for someone else is not only essential, but it is also „just“.

However, there is no basis for this doctrine within orthodox tradition. The principles *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello*, starting from St. Augustine, have been further developed in Rome-Catholicism and they cannot be found with Greek fathers or in the Orthodox church canons. Since we cannot find the *ius ad bello* conditions in orthodoxy, it is obvious that the just war theory has not been developed in the true sense, and we share the opinion which consider this as „ethical discovery“.⁶⁸

There is consistency in orthodoxy on negative morale estimation of war. It is emphasized that war is necessary in certain situations, in order to protect the innocent ones and to prevent even bigger evil but, nevertheless, it is always considered in its essence to be a big, unavoidable evil. There are neither theoretical nor theological arguments that consider any war as something positive. In this tradition of opinion a just war is not mentioned, especially not a good war, and crusades are not justified at all. A war can only be necessary but not justified, and as such it is a moral tragedy. The key topic in orthodoxy among holy fathers and in the church canons is concern for peace.

Thus, orthodoxy is not a pacifistic standpoint, but just war theory also has been developed within this tradition, and that for certainly has its practical implications.

Conclusion

Literally understood Gospel covenant „not opposing evil“, that has been extending as external rule of behavior in order to preserve purity of own Christian conscience is totally unacceptable standpoint for Orthodox Christians. Furthermore, that Tolstoy-sectarian understanding is totally opposed to Christian conscience – pharisaism. Struggle against evil is not disapproved in Orthodoxy, that is use of force against the evil bearers, even not a human life deprival as the ultimate, unavoidable means, but the issue that is disapproved is malice in a human being's heart, wish to humiliate, hurt, wound or kill other human being.

Canons of Orthodox Church inherit the most valuable holy fathers' traditional opinion on murder in war that is considered to be intentional murder or murder with premeditation. Presumably, orthodox people primarily accepted through their history the attitude of St. Athanasius the Great, who claims that killing is not allowed, but killing the enemies in war is both legal and worthy of praise. That is why those who stand out in war deserve the highest honor and they are monumentalized, thus affirming their famous deeds. Reason for that can be predominantly found in difficult social and historic circumstances of the orthodox nations' struggle for their survival. However, we think that it is deeper on the trail of Orthodox spirituality and ethos and that the attitude of St. Basil the Great is applicable even today- the attitude according to which a soldier who killed his enemy in war for honorable reasons is to be exposed to *epitimia*, and it means that he mustn't take holy communion for a three-year-period.

Christians have to accept consciously that contradictory situation, they have to participate in a war if the Church blesses it and, if they kill the enemy, they have to be

⁶⁸ Grozdić B., *Orthodoxy and War*, NIC „Vojska“, Belgrade, 2001

ready to accept epitimia so that they cannot forget that they killed a human being. The country can decorate a soldier-Christian with the highest Medal of Bravery and victories in war, but he must be ready to accept the spiritual sanction predicted by the Church. A nice example is given by St. Nikolai (Velimirović), who explains the way in which non-Christian nations preserved awareness about sanctuary of human life. There was a practice in China that a judge gave money to the executioner after he executed the convict and immediately after that, he sentenced him to 50 beatings so that the executioner would not forget that he had committed murder.

In case a cleric commits murder, it is planned for him to be undone, regardless of the committing of the murder in war or peace. The church canons relating murder in war should not be equalized with the attitude of the church toward war as such. Saying that killing in war is deliberate, which means that is intentional murder and that it is a sin which should be followed by certain epitimia, still does not mean that the Church absolutely negates war as such as well as participating of its believers in the war. It only confirms how tragic war is for Christians, a situation they cannot reject, avoid or pretend they do not see it. Obligation of Christians is to participate in a war for noble motives (love, justice, duty, service) because of necessity, but they do that bravely and must be ready for all the consequences deriving from it.

A Christian can be put in a situation, such as state of war, in which he absolutely does not have possibility to avoid a sin as killing of an opponent is. However, it is still smaller sin for a Christian conscience than omission and passive attitude toward the world evil and suffering of his loved. In that difficult dilemma which does not leave "clean hands" moral exit, they have to consciously accept wrongness, to accept not only the burden of death but also the burden of murder.

The globalization processes and treat to the survival on the planet impose additional moral responsibility for evil in this world equally to Christians and to all other people. Although a man is not able to totally destroy evil and establish absolute holiness of terrestrial life, he has to participate actively and by all means defend the world against evil.

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