

## CHAPTER V

### PACIFISTS

Pacifists constitute one of the most important movements in the West, especially in Western Europe. The term “subculture”, as appears in the first edition, is inappropriate and must be rectified. The message, of course, remains the same, particularly in that it is good to see men as they are, not as they should be, especially when we have sworn enemies. And while Reverend Jesse Jackson *opens* his mind, the communists conquer another country. In truth, Jackson has only a sort of thirdworldist disposition of mind; but the communists support his peace offensives because they make good use of them as propaganda.

There is, in fact, a type of pacifist, the true pacifist,<sup>1</sup> who is the only one to value peace in its proper dimension. We speak here of the humanistic dimension—the religious one has been previously discussed, and it refers to certain spiritual attitudes rather than to peace itself formally considered.<sup>2</sup> The humanistic one, which is our main concern here, is centered in its respect for right, including rights we have yet to mention: the right to be treated with respect and dignity, the inviolability of personal integrity, freedom from harassment, the right to privacy, and many others, which bring about peace. Peace, then, is not properly a right or a constitutive-legal demand of a people; it is an outcome. The common pacifist takes peace to be a formal demand to which he assigns moral priority. The true pacifist procures it by making prevail a nomocratic framework of right. In opposition to his counterpart, therefore, he never accepts the peace

which results from accommodating or submitting, if such a thing can be called peace.

### **Of weapons and war**

The warrior must prepare for war just like the judge must prepare to apply the law and the physician to combat disease. If the army were not constantly preparing to wage and win war, it would be better to dispense with it. Just like every professional, the army must have the best tools, in this case weapons. Ideally, science must not be selfish, and must contribute to universal progress and peace. But there are times when it must contribute to safeguard higher values. And the harsh reality is that the scientists of the Soviet Union will never be masters of their fate, and will be forced or persuaded to work for the destruction of the West. That is why Western scientists must put the best of their intelligence to work for the development of more effective offensive and defensive weapons in order to win any possible war. It is true that weapon stockpiling is often the result of fear, and that fear or distrust should not exist in an ideal situation, but this is not an ideal situation. Fear may be the worst enemy of man for his spiritual development, but it is also his best defense for survival. Without it, we would become foolhardy, or put our trust in those who did not warrant it. The saint and the wise man may lose that defense in their path to perfection, but they gain wisdom and prudence in the process.

It is worth mentioning that we normally use the terms innocent and non-combatant indistinctly, when a clear-cut distinction is warranted in many cases. A defender of freedom, for example, may in some cases become an active combatant and remain innocent of what may happen. Equally, some who hold no weapons in their hands deserve to be labeled combatants and are more culpable than the soldiers themselves. Before continuing, I must make clear that if I speak of enemies it is simply because there are those who have proclaimed themselves as such. Western countries, on the contrary, have stretched too much their hand to communist regimes. There is no substitute for weapons when war knocks on the door. Can roads and railways provide strength? They can to some extent,

just like all material infrastructure. Throughout history, however, more prosperous countries have fallen victims to aggression from rivals with relatively better armies. If weapons are neglected, roads and railways may serve only to transport the communists in a not too distant future.

The matter of nuclear weapons is a delicate and multifaceted one. On the one hand, a nuclear freeze or disarmament can only be acceptable if the democracies are not left with an inferiority of conventional weapons, or with an unbalanceable numerical inferiority of men at arms. On the other hand, if that is the situation, and nuclear weapons can compensate for such inferiority, then they constitute a morally valid and necessary resource. Throughout history, smaller armies and weaker peoples have been able to defeat more powerful ones by virtue of having, among other things, better weapons. Most experts agree that the Soviet Union today is superior in conventional forces to the US, which I believe is difficult to estimate. Superior technology might tilt the balance toward the latter. In any case, new weapon systems are more than justified because enemy strength and resources are not accurately known. It is reasonable to make the best shields and swords because we cannot be sure how deft the enemy is until we meet him on the field of battle.<sup>3</sup> In a conventional war, the regular armies of Western Europe would be defenseless before the armies of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. With nuclear weapons in both their arsenals, differences are less clear-cut; numerical superiority and other factors are not as crucial. Thus, nuclear arms help maintain a balance, and may have in fact preserved the peace in Europe to this moment.

War and weapons are as ethical as the cause they defend. Base means, however, may diminish the validity of any cause, or rather, the credibility of those who fight for it. And if everyone seeks the best means of defeating the enemy, the time may come when everyone will possess a nuclear arsenal, and nuclear wars will become conventional. When we are attacked with stones (intent on killing us), whether we respond in kind, or with poison or bombs, does not alter by itself the ethical judgment. But the use of nuclear weapons is not justified against those who have no defense against them, and who can be defeated in some other way without suffering great losses,

because they wreak havoc on the civilian population and cause unnecessary deaths among soldiers who merely obey orders. The most undesirable aspect of nuclear arms, and the greatest objection to them, lies in the potential for mass destruction and ecological damage which would affect those who have no part in the conflict. We should consider, however, that a situation may arise where everyone must assume combative responsibility or at least share in the sacrifice. The above considerations were not important in the past, because other than the siege of cities, where innocents perished, battlefields were usually far from civilian population centers, and the conflict was resolved between armies. Unfortunately, that is no longer true today, and military objectives are usually located near large population centers, so a nuclear war would unavoidably bring about the death of a substantial number of non-combatants. That is why we can only wage such a war in the most extreme of circumstances, where the externalities caused by it may perhaps remain at the sensible level and may be deemed praxical. This situation poses the most difficult test to the third principle of nomocratic right, since, obviously, we cannot make amends to the dead. We can, however, make reparations to the survivors. The sacrifice of innocents would then be a matter of fate, to be judged only by God.

If another tool could be found that proved as effective at dissuasion and protection, and did not imply such dire consequences, nuclear arms should be destroyed. It is difficult to weigh the pros and cons, but it would appear that these weapons constitute a lasting reality, since considerations of military strategy and national security make a zero option only remotely acceptable. This is the reality we must consider. Nuclear weapons are not anti-ethical in themselves, if the goal is to use them with the greatest possible specificity with no intent of harming non-combatants, as a last-instance praxis, and for legitimate purposes. Intention is here of capital importance. With that in mind, nuclear weapons could be used for the purpose of bringing war to an end, if its continuation by conventional means entailed a greater suffering and an unpredictable final outcome. Unnecessary actions which do not contribute to bring war to an end, and do not achieve strategic or tactical victories on the battlefield, but are rather intended to

hurt morale and are expressions of hatred and contempt for life and human rights, are above all anti-ethical. In truth, it is war, rather than any particular type of weapons, which must always be a measure of last resort. The human mind is the most powerful weapon there is, and the military uses of the wheel, although less impressive and fast-working, are infinitely more destructive than the nuclear option if such is the intent. Without the wheel, it would not be as easy to transport troops, attack remote peoples, or retain and guard occupied territories. If our overriding goal were to prevent men from killing one another, abolishing nuclear arms might not be as effective as abolishing the wheel.

It is a thousand times worse, from the perspective of the pure moral act, to kill a single person for mean gains than to destroy an entire army intent on enslaving us. As catastrophic as a Third World War might be, the next generation would accept a world enslaved even less readily than a world destroyed. And what is preferable, instantaneous death in a nuclear war, or execution as an enemy of humanity by mere virtue of pursuing one's own happiness? Because losing a war against the communist enemy will mean millions of innocents lined up against the wall. To be sure, the suffering will be much worse than any scene in the movie intended to depict the aftermath of nuclear destruction, *The Day After*.

The great difference between wars and individual conflicts is that in the former there is no judge to resolve the conflict, and we must administer justice by our own hands. While not in itself illegitimate, this has been proscribed in internal matters because it has resulted in undesirable consequences. But from the ethical perspective, there is little difference between the internal administration of justice and a legitimate act of war. Here, thus, the contents of right must be extrapolated to a higher dimension, where the sensible evil caused on one side is transcended in a praxical synthesis represented in the triumph of the good cause. Now then, if those convinced that they are following the right path envision peace as the final outcome, violence in the attempt to prevent the imposition of what in their view is an anti-natural path will seem reasonable to them. And in the face of this harsh reality, peace must be guaranteed through strength of arms and of spirit. For a

peace agreement, mutual respect is necessary. All that is needed for war is the greed, the hatred or the envy of one side. War can be unilaterally imposed. Not so peace.

Over the long term, the only way in which rapprochement is achieved is by maintaining, not a hostile or aggressive stance, but an attitude of honor and strength. If we and our children must die for a just cause, we must resign ourselves to face that fact with courage. What is important is that those who survive lead the world to a final victory. The policy of bread rather than weapons is viable when there is peace, when there are no enemies, when man has learned to respect the rights of others. If bread is not defended with weapons, there will be neither bread nor peace. Had the Greeks not heeded Themistocles, who enjoined them to prepare for war, the Persians would have enslaved Athens. Aristides was ostracized because he preached submission and risked enslavement. There is a time to dance, and a time to grow fat, and there is also a time to fight.

War is the most extreme circumstance man can ever face; no wonder it provokes opposing feelings and arguments. We lament man killing man, but under certain circumstances we see it as a duty. We consider war a disgrace, but we praise the warriors who bring justice. I think it is possible to conciliate all those conflicting dispositions and accept war as a necessary evil, yet in the sensible not in the moral context. Actually, we never glorify war itself, or praise the taking of lives by the hands of man. What we exalt and revere is the cause and defense of our values and ideals. But taking war as an end in itself, only indicates a sheer retrogression to animality. Reintroducing the religious context into these matters, the strength of the rationale behind the eschatological promise of peace is undeniable, and yet God never berated His chosen people for rejoicing at their victories in battle. There are those who are ready to die for what they believe in, and those whose beliefs crumble when faced with the possibility of death. We must pray for an honorable peace, and that we never come to war, but if all we get by avoiding war is a lost opportunity for gaining permanent peace, then we must pray for the courage and determination to march to battle. The most noble prayer is the one that precedes combat.

Thus, the true pacifist prays for peace but sharpens his sword. He prays for his children who are about to die, but wants them on the battlefield when the motherland is at risk. The pacifist to the death prays for peace and for his children to live, but risks bequeathing to them life under the yoke of a master. Enticed by an absolute praxis, the pacifist neglects that of the moment, that is, orthopraxis. Although at the end of time the lamb will transcend the lion, both will come to shake hands.

Pacifists claim the US has confirmed their fears by getting involved in Central America. If they had the integrity to fight for liberty, such involvement would have confirmed their hopes. Pacifists neither pray nor protest against communist aggression. The Holy Father put it well when he said that the true peacemaker not only seeks peace, but fights its enemies as well. Our task is to gain wisdom so that we can tell where the enemies of peace really are. Some say that war can only be justified if it is the defense of God. True and honorable pacifists stand precisely for everything that God has given man: freedom, property, faith, family. Where are faith and inherited values more at risk, under capitalism or under communism? Let us choose, then, to be on the side of God. And if we do not believe in God, let us at least choose to be on the side of nature and on the side of man.

### **Decadence and barbarian spirit\***

The phenomenon of decadence does not refer here to the adoption of practices in conflict with conventional morality. In the sense which interests us, it refers to the loss of or disdain for certain values of the culture—patriotic sentiment, especially—and to an unwillingness to defend them, unwillingness which may even turn into open aggression against the values lost or disdained. Decadents summon their will only to fight against their own values, which puts their consciousness of duty on shaky ground. Those who reject war, but not internal legal action against individuals, overlook the key exigency to

*\*Editorial note:* By barbarian spirit, the author here refers to certain characteristics of barbarian and savage peoples, such as indomitable fighting spirit, iron will, courage, tenacity, and a spirit of sacrifice.

make justice and truth prevail. Since war tends to bring the basest instincts to the fore, we must seek political solutions or agreements. But these can only bear fruit if they come as a result of dialogue involving groups truly interested in peaceful coexistence although they have become distant for one reason or another. Many other times, dialogue serves only as a respite, while contenders strengthen their positions and prepare to widen the conflict.

Parallel to left-wing pacifist groups, associations have developed which count the former among their members, together with supporters of non-intervention and committees of solidarity with the oppressed peoples. Such associations number in the hundreds in the US alone, and they include sympathetic sectors of the clergy as well as groups with open Marxist inclinations. They all brandish slogans which present them as supporters of non-violent, democratic solutions, but their backing of the anti-imperialist struggle (which, according to them, characterizes such insurgent movements as those in Latin America) is always clear. We cannot expect a pacifist to lack a political stand. But we do expect them to reject any structural source of violence, and not to be just one-sided pacifists. They even reach the extreme of demanding an end to the importation of coffee from El Salvador, on the pretext that the army will then be deprived of the resources necessary to wage war and to continue massacring the people. In the tens of thousands, humble members of Salvadoran cooperatives have protested such a boycott, fully realizing that it is intended to increase misery and unemployment. Thus will *the people* triumph, represented (as far as these associations are concerned) by *the pacifists* of the FMLN.<sup>4</sup>

Pacifists protest every expression—artistic, literary or any other kind—tending to temper character and spirit for the defense of the Western ways, on the pretext that it represents a glorification of violence.<sup>5</sup> But a fighting spirit is characteristic of peoples and civilizations on the rise, while the lack of fundamentalist will is the most important sign of decadence. Peace bought through the bourgeois proclivity for expedient halfway measures is always short-lasting, and presages a bloodier war under less favorable conditions. Violence, however, must be rational in order to be acceptable. To be the prod-



uct of the spirit rather than of the beast, which only rarely occurs, it must not supersede our interior peace. Pacifists screamed their lungs out against the killing in Southeast Asia (provoked by the US, according to them) but remained silent before the genocide that ensued. I believe and hope that today we are witnessing a revitalization of barbarian spirit in the United States of America, where decadence seemingly characterizes only a minority. Peace offensives, however, are multiplying in Western Europe, with demonstrations of truly decadent agitation and meaningless movements reflecting a terrible spiritual weakness. I hope decadents do not suffer the fate of Belshazzar and the Babylonians, who partied on in the middle of the city while their enemies were already in control of the periphery. It speaks well of civilization that finally there are organized efforts aimed at the peaceful overcoming of our differences, above all those functioning at the international level. But even (or particularly) these can be misused if we do not cultivate our discernment and our faith. Because one of its results is an unswayable fight for truth.

The conservative triumph in several elections, joined by some by-partisan courageous attitudes and actions, has demonstrated that a good part of the North American people is up to the struggle. It is lamentable, however, that such fighting spirit does not yet translate to mass dedication to praxis, as for example an organized extra-partisan fundamentalist movement. There were those who tore their Army registration cards after the Grenada invasion. Others, however, were quick to enlist. A thousand times bravo to them!<sup>6</sup> This does not at all reflect an imperialist attitude or signify approval of unjustifiable warmongering policies. Of course not. It shows, rather, the concern that we cannot let freedom die. We have some great role models for that: indomitable warriors fighting against communism in Central America, Oliver North bravely defending the national interest, and the US Marine shouting *Semper fidelis!* though gravely wounded. It is time for an open and general institutional support for them. The credibility of US foreign policy would suffer only before the eyes of the demagogic diplomacy characteristic of today's world. It is also time for recognizing our mistakes and offering our helping hand; though not with a self-defeating attitude, but offering the truth as well.

So far, the existence of irreconcilable differences has been a watchword of the communists, but the time is coming when their actions against freedom will become irreconcilable with the spirit of free men. Perhaps there is still hope that a majority of the pacifists will join the struggle if they manage to get the picture. At bottom, I believe that most pacifists possess a deep understanding but also a too ingenuous soul, so they dismiss our concerns. The doctrine of non-violence was successful in India because of special circumstances, and because it could count on the dynamic support of hundreds of millions. But in other cases, where too differing views of basic values are involved, it would lead only to slavery. Maybe non-violence will eventually triumph in the world. But that is small consolation for those who will see their children and the children of their children enslaved, as Nixon well says in *The Real War*.<sup>7</sup> Peaceful resistance stirs lofty souls; grosser ones disdain it.

We all want to save the earth from destruction, but not at the cost of a bigger loss: that of our culture, our faith, and our traditional values. And since we do not know how stubborn the enemy can be, we must be prepared for the worst. There is nothing objectionable in the free countries preparing to win a possible war, since they are not planning to act at will without fear of reprisal. When war comes, there is no substitute for victory. We must never forget that.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>We can distinguish a number of types of pacifists, in full awareness that types overlap in many cases:

1) The true pacifist. This is the type of pacifist the free world needs, the one who loves peace with fundamentalist devotion. He knows that peace is better achieved through rational persuasion than through imposition. Still he fights tyrants and makes war against injustice precisely in order to achieve peace. In spirit of conciliation, he often makes concessions even when he knows that reason is on his side, but he will not allow himself to be taken to a situation where his rights are endangered.

2) The pacifist to the death. Blinded by his devotion to peace, he is incapable of defending combatively what he thinks is right because he thinks that no one is. Most of these pacifists to the death are idealists who seem to have channeled their good humanistic dispositions outside of the context of the value justice, through a unipolar (or absolute) appreciation of religious truths. I remember attending a yoga session where the speaker, Dr. B. Reyes, expressed the incredibly daring opinion that the army was only good for learning how to walk straight and pull in the stomach. His audience

responded with applause and smiles of approval, reflecting a tendency common to many Western practitioners of yoga and similar disciplines.

Others are incensed at the thought of innocents dying in a war that may never even occur. But the combativeness shown by the West is aimed at securing borders, not at waging a war of conquest. The defenders of freedom are the ones who should be incensed: their blood and that of their children covers the battlefield, while the pacifist to the death presents the white flag to the sworn enemy. Many of them are aggressive and violent against the defenders of freedom. Against the real enemy, they are as meek as lambs. The scared are among them: they have daily nightmares about the havoc of a nuclear war. In that, they are right, but not when they proclaim *Better Red than dead*. The pusillanimous, and the surrender-prone are also among them. The worst of those can be found in West Germany; while they are free, their brothers behind the Wall are slaves. And they hate the US to death even though they owe it their freedom. They despise and reject the missiles which can guarantee that freedom, yet accept the ones which are pointed at their heart. Very little remains in them of the traditional German warrior spirit. Yet others have deserted the Christian religion—or take it out of context and orthopraxis—and usually adopt extreme conciliatory positions lacking in fundamentalist spirit. They tend to find nothing in the West worth fighting for, so they become hostile to its defense. Many practitioners of yoga and Zen, converts to Hinduism and Buddhism, and others, belong to this group.

3) The confused. They are victims of the ideological assault on the West. Every act in defense of capitalist democracy is a reason for protest because, they believe, it connotes an imperialist attitude. Every weapons system proposed for national security is seen as aggressive. Generally, these groups do not share the religious background (common to the others we have already discussed) to explain their pacifism. They simply believe that the West is in the wrong. They are afflicted with the *mea culpa syndrome*, which paralyzes their will. Many liberal university students belong to this group, as well as former hippies (who usually also belong to the previous group) and the victims of disinformation by the alienating press. Of all the non-true pacifists, these are the ones with the best chance of returning to reality and of seeing things as they really are. They could become a good resource to counteract the real warmongers.

4) The carefree. This type includes those who would rather eat, drink and be merry. Do not mention problems to them, much less a war! Their main characteristic is lack of responsibility. Many businessmen and entrepreneurs who are *doing fine* and who are not willing to risk anything can also be found in this group, as well as those who are lacking in spirituality and moral values.

5) The pseudo-pacifists. They are not real humanitarian or concerned people, but agents infiltrated among them in order to create an attitude of discouragement and to bring about the loss of the will to fight in the Western world. Of course, they oppose all US rearmament, the anti-communist triumph in Central America, missile installations in Europe, and so on.

There remains, withal, a very special group, opposed in principle to any recourse to violence, and motivated by high-minded religious principles. They are in no way cowards, and cannot be lumped together with the pacifists to the death. They are strong-minded, possessing an admirable, compassionate and lofty soul, and are never seen engaging in the kinds of public display mentioned for other groups. They are faithful followers of the principle of turning the other cheek (within the interpretation mentioned in

a previous chapter). Still, they are also faulty in their appreciation of the present conflict, and tend to apportion blame indiscriminately on all who engage in battle. They cannot realize that reason and faith do not exclude the use of power. For reason and faith will always give rise to the will to defend the truth; and truth, in turn, possesses a praxical moment which requires a power to shield it.

<sup>2</sup>There is no doubt that, with Jesus Christ, Biblical religious guidance definitely points to love as the supreme value. How, then, can we conciliate that with the maintenance of order and justice? Because if love excludes violence, it must also do so in matters of the defense of property, the punishment of criminals and so on, since all of that implies violent action of identical formal basis in the human soul. The solution proposed by Buddha, based on education, understanding and so on, is utopian. The need to act in defense of the truth, on the other hand, can be deduced from the historical Biblical context, from the doctrine (there are parables illustrating the need to apply human justice) and from praxis (expelling the merchants from the temple, for instance).

It is difficult, however, to set great wrongs right without experiencing and generating feelings of revenge, hatred, or at least a lack of understanding. Since (and fundamentally because) that is how things are, Christianity must oppose violence. But will that in itself make us virtuous? Would we be resigning ourselves and leaving everything in the hands of God, or would we be necessarily manifesting love to the aggressor? Love also knows of degrees, and may be manifested in special ways. The man of here and now, therefore, may only be required to act motivated by an ideal of justice which at the present historical moment, and in reference to the joint action of large human groups, belongs more to ideology. Although ideologies, as opposed to religions, may be based on egoism, envy and other human shortcomings, it is possible to conceive one which fosters the expression of love because it promotes justice. Christ may have preached resignation, rather than the defense of such an ideology through violent means, because His doctrine demands the strict pursuit of the Way. But I do not believe that the man who undertakes such a defense—when there is no other alternative, and with nobility of deed—is thereby condemned before Him. Because, among other things, He did not condemn Peter for that, but rather entrusted him with the leadership of His Church.

<sup>3</sup>I cannot opine on whether the MX is preferable to smaller missiles, or whether it is better to wait for the Stealth bomber than to make B-1s now. All of that depends on a series of economic and strategic considerations which are not of my expertise. I do believe it is absolutely essential to be prepared. The danger in a nuclear freeze agreement lies in that, as many aver, it would not be adequately verifiable and that the Soviets could not be trusted to keep it—they have a long history of violating agreements—while breaking it would be almost impossible for the US, given its political structure. Deterrence is not only achieved by knowledge of what is in the respective enemy arsenals, but also by ignorance of it.

The problem of SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative—the system of anti-missile missiles in space) is a complex one. Some believe that it simply will not work, or that the Soviet Union would unleash a spiraling buildup of offensive weapons in order to overwhelm it. Withal, the idea itself is not bad. The proposed system is the first hope ever conceived of defense from a nuclear attack, and no cost is unjustifiable when the life of the nation is

at stake. Some also argue that the system may lead to the development of new offensive technologies. Well, then, new defenses would have to be found. This is not a buildup for the sake of a buildup: the enemy is out there. If the US is able to create a shield and the Soviet Union is not, the former need not apologize: the latter would have already built it had it been able to. Many feel that if the United States builds such a strategic defense, it will use its newfound invulnerability in order to aggress others at whim. But let us also remember that it already had a monopoly of nuclear power in the past, and did not use it against sworn enemies. Those who always be those gluttons for punishment who will argue that building such a shield is unfair, and that it would have to be facilitated to the Soviet Union in order to maintain parity, forget causes, forget that there are enemies, and forget history. The United States should already be building an anti-missile system, and it should not be letting out a peep about it!

<sup>4</sup>I feel that most pacifists are impressed by the ciphers that human rights organizations duly compute, which invariably attribute most executions or deaths of civilians to para-military groups. But does someone stop to think how they can assert such a thing? If the answer is that those executed were known left-wing militants, then one must ask oneself how such organizations can be sure that such militants were not actually fighters. In my book *El Salvador, Who Speaks for the People?* I provide some insights on the matter. But more important is to avoid falling into the trap of the ciphers, because even if it proved true that most deaths can be attributed to right-wing groups, this constitutes no ground whatsoever to put the blame on them. During the Gulf War, North Americans killed many more Iraqis than Iraqis North Americans; and yet, could we blame the former just on that fact for violating human rights?

<sup>5</sup>Generally, anti-communist artistic expressions do not in any way incite hatred against a race or nation. If they stir healthy patriotic feelings it is because they depict a sad reality which is repulsive to any normal human being. Quite the contrary, reality is grossly distorted in such movies as *Salvador*, which decadents surely approve of, even though it generates ill feelings against those who are actually often the victims. *Salvador* certainly glorifies communist violence, attributing to it a just and noble character Hollywoodish to the utmost. Young people should be able to see more monuments honoring the heroes of Vietnam, rather than movies like *Platoon*.

<sup>6</sup>Rand, Ayn, *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*, Ch. XXI, pp. 221-235. New American Library, New York 1967. Although I am, of course, an admirer of the author, I differ with her on some of her ideas, especially because I believe every member of society has an obligation to society, although not in the same way. When such obligation is organic and rational, it cannot be asserted that one group of the population is willfully dictating the behavior of another. It is not that duty is above rights, but that the rational negative moment of freedom at one dialectical social pole is a right at the other, and as long as the common good is at stake man is duty-bound to defend his rights, at least in the institutional context, what takes us to an important theme. In general terms, I am against obligatory conscription, above all because it is usually unnecessary. But is it really ever necessary? Before answering that question, let us recall the two reasons Ayn Rand gives for why a national army might be short of volunteers:

- 1) a corrupt and authoritarian government has demoralized the country, or
- 2) the government is waging a war no one understands or accepts.

This is generally true, but it only tells part of the story. A country may be demoralized by its loss of fundamental values, and not necessarily by government failures and faults. A people so confused does not readily join the army, because it has lost sight of what there is to be defended. If, as Ayn Rand states, no one were obligated to anyone other than himself, it would be impossible to constitute a stable army: it could dissolve at any moment, and anarchy would take over. We could not leave it to every new member of society to decide for himself what he will commit himself to: there is an inherited commitment which emanates from the support provided by society for our survival and welfare. Ayn Rand opposed those who hoisted the Vietcong flag because they endangered the safety of the group, thus violating the rights of others. But this is incompatible with her concept that one is obligated only to oneself. In order to defend rights, institutions are needed, and we must have an accord specifying reciprocal rights and obligations for institutions to function.

I agree that, thanks to advanced technology, a huge standing army is not necessary in the US today, and that a volunteer army is much preferable to forced conscription. Refusing to join the army may, within limits, be acceptable under normal and stable conditions, and it must be clear that no one should have to be forced to fight an anti-ethical war or to defend a corrupt regime. But while an army made up of volunteers could constitute an effective check on warmongering government policies, it could also start a war on its own. The army, let us remember, is generally more combative than the government, and that we are assuming here a great deal of autonomy for such an army. I also agree that the draft is similar in some respects to recruiting workers by force, evoking a socialist measure. Now then, forcing people to work may fulfill an economic purpose, but only at the cost of sacrificing the individual's right to determine whether or when to undertake economic initiatives. On the other hand, the maintenance of a state of right demands a monopoly over the use of force, which can only be implemented through armed institutions, including the police. We generally associate recruitment with the regular army; but in certain circumstances a draft might be necessary for (what for all intents and purposes constitute) urban, rural, border and other armies. And there are practical differences in many respects: a laborer can be conscripted any time, but a soldier must be trained to be useful. It is never too late, perhaps, to recruit laborers, but it can be too late to train an effective army. An army also needs time to build reserves. Without them, it cannot draft just anyone for combat and still have a reasonable chance of fulfilling its mission.

To respond more specically to the question of the draft, I see this matter as follows: first of all, a year or two of military service do not detract from an academic carrer or other enterprises. Recruits generally enter the army in times of peace and do not immediately enter combat. Thus, their reserves need not to be made up from an universal recruitment, which would be justified only in emergency situations. The call to arms may not be necessary when the nation is already at war: volunteers usually abound. In peacetime, on the other hand, the state must ensure that there is always institutional preparedness in case it is ever needed. That is precisely the reason it can impose the draft. This is a payment every individual owes to society, or rather, a preparation for possible payment in the event of war. The answer must be wider in scope, the draft being only one aspect of the obligation every formative unit

has to society. The only possible exception is that of the conscientious objector, "whose principles forbid him to brandish a weapon".\* That exception must be clearly identifiable, however, and will not apply to what should be preferred targets of recruiters, such as street bums and gang members—whose rehabilitation would constitute an additional benefit to society. Of course, we are talking here about an army with principles. When the situation is one of clear and undisputed aggression, those who refuse to defend the motherland are certainly breaking the social contract and refusing to fulfill the legitimate obligation they owe it in exchange for all that they have received. In turn, society is thus entitled to end all association with (and all its obligations to) them. The case of the draft is less dramatic, but it is still the prologue to the fulfillment of the above mentioned obligation.

<sup>7</sup>Nixon, R., *La verdadera guerra*. Editorial Planeta, Barcelona 1980. In addition to being an astute politician, Nixon has accurately grasped the philosophical essence of many matters. Mystics have long proclaimed that weakness will always defeat strength, as Lao-Tse put it in precisely those words. But that is based on a rather murky definition of weakness, and a conduct that only the mystic may follow in the proximate steps. Nixon makes reference to the spirit and the sword in citing Napoleon, which can fit our discussion with little adaptation.

\* Zanotti, G., *El humanismo del futuro*, Ch.IV, p.240. Editorial de Belgrano, Buenos Aires 1989.