

Nonviolence and pacifism after Ukraine

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The ongoing war in Ukraine and the recent Israel-Hamas conflict in the Gaza Strip have not only disrupted the liberal consensus of the 21st century but have also heightened the risk of a series of wide-scale regional and international conflicts. Mentions of nuclear weapons in political discourses, a rising number of territorial disputes, and the increasingly evident shift from a unipolar to a multipolar world further exacerbate the threat of global escalation.

In times when discourses of war and militarism are normalized in everyday life, pacifism and nonviolence often emerge as a counter-narrative to the violent nature of politics and war. Debates about (anti-)militarism, just war, and the socio-political ramifications of large-scale conflicts have resurfaced in the public realm. These realities call for a return to and re-evaluation of timeless normative questions concerning the justification of the use of violence, conflict resolution and reconciliation, humanitarian intervention, the necessity of war, what peace is, and how to reach and maintain it – all considerations necessary for navigating through and finding hope in resolving our current predicament.

Therefore, this workshop invites scholars working on the interrelated concepts of pacifism and nonviolence to contribute to addressing these concerns. In recent years, the two concepts, which fundamentally capture and offer an alternative approach to violence and militarism, have garnered growing scholarly interest. A rising number of nonviolent struggles have proven successful domestically and internationally, and research on civil disobedience and nonviolent action has seen a significant increase (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Chenoweth & Schock, 2015; Pinckney, 2016).

Similarly, in recent years, there has been a revival of interest in the study of pacifism, with many attempts to conceptualize and define it, while also tracing its relevance to moral and ethical philosophy, the just war tradition, peace and conflict studies, and the discipline of resistance studies (Fiala, 2018). The scholarly study of pacifism has become a multi-disciplinary endeavour that consists of historiographical research on pacifist movements, institutions, and communities and their impact in times of conflict, a deontological and consequentialist ethical critique of war and the just war theory and attempts to defend the tradition from critiques and hasty dismissals as political nihilism (Cady, 2015; Clements, 2015; Zunes, 2023).

This workshop aims to bring together scholars who recognize themselves as working in these broad and interdisciplinary traditions and invites contributions on the contemporary political relevance of nonviolence and pacifism in a world in which violence, militarism, and war seem to have become the norm. Considered papers should touch on, but are not limited to:

- Conceptual approaches to nonviolence and pacifism
- Ethical, moral and religious reflections on pacifism and nonviolence
- Pacifism and the Just war tradition
- Critiques of militarism, war and violence
- Pacifist and nonviolent historiographies
- Nonviolent and pacifist theories and practices outside of the Global North
- Violence and nonviolence in political thought
- The relationship between violence/nonviolence, pacifism and gender, race, and other social identities