

G. A. Hajiyev¹

A HAUNTING TRAGEDY OR CATHARSIS?

The urgency and unexpectedness of events since February this year, the rupture of international legal and established economic relations that have been built over decades, inevitably give rise to alarmism. The expression of V. D. Zorkin has come to life: “The world is tired of peace.”

What is going on – a dangerous collapse of the established legal world order or a healthy catharsis? In Poetic, treatise on the theory of drama, Aristotle used the metaphor of catharsis, which means physical cleansing of the human body. He compared it to the effect of tragedy on the mind of man.

To understand the meaning of the ongoing events, we must immerse its entire series in a complex context of political, economic, ideological relations and recall the discussions about the possible ways of constitutionalizing international law. And we must recall Shakespeare!

In the early 2000s, J. Habermas published a number of papers and gave several interviews on the terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001 and their aftermath – the war in Iraq, Yugoslavia (Kosovo), crisis of the UN and international law. He focuses on the problem of the collapse of the process of constitutionalization of international law by the “hegemonic power,” in development of Kant’s project “Toward Perpetual Peace.”

The discussions originate from Kant’s ideas of perpetual peace (“either perpetual peace among nations or cemetery peace,” according to E. Yu. Solovyov) and his project of the state of civil law, described in his treatise “Toward Perpetual Peace.”

Kant’s project, directed toward the distant future, is summarized in the following fragment: “The problem of

creating a perfect civil order depends on the problem of lawfulness of foreign relations between states; without the solution of the latter, the former cannot be solved.”² By lawful relations between states he meant the requirements that are quite understandable to the ordinary, subjective, “unmystified” mind.

Kant rose to the level of foresight of what happened in the twentieth century when he suggested that we should consider whether the political skill of men, shaped by the “inherent discord of the human race,” could one day become a true “hell with its misery,” so that in the end “both the condition already achieved and all previous progress in culture would again be destroyed by barbaric desolation.” Being quite realistic, he assumed that “halfway” to lawful interstate relations, “the human nature will probably experience the most severe calamities.”³

Kant is a representative of idealism in philosophy. Has he made any miscalculations in his project leading to a “world state”?

Two centuries later, it became possible both to appreciate its strengths and to find its possible weaknesses. In the twentieth century, the seed planted in the purely European soil began to produce sprouts: the Kellogg–Briand Pact; the founding of the League of Nations after World War I, when the United States entered the European arena; the policy of victors, in which the USSR was already involved along with the United States and Great Britain; and the emergence of the United Nations.

In April 1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote that “more than the end of this war, we want an end to all military undertakings.”

But the U.S. still took the path of militarization, abandoning the implementation of Roosevelt’s dreams. U.S. global power ambitions have become a reality.

The UN became a “paper tiger”; there was the Srebrenica tragedy; the Kosovo conflict; the concept of “militant democracy” and later, the concept of the neoconservatives emerged, with their vision of an American policy to create

¹ Judge of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, Dr. Sc. (Law), Professor, Honored Lawyer of the Russian Federation. Author of more than 270 scientific works, including monographs and textbooks: “The Protection of Basic Economic Rights and Freedoms of Entrepreneurs Abroad and in the Russian Federation: the Experience of Comparative Analysis,” “Entrepreneur – Taxpayer – State: Legal Positions of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation,” “Constitutional Principles of Market Economy,” “Constitutional Economics,” “Ontology of Law (Critical Study of Legal Concept of Reality),” “Russian Judicial Power: the Modernity and Prospects” (co-authored), “Law and Economics (Methodology)” and others. Member of editorial boards of 12 scientific journals. Member of the Presidential Council for the Codification and Improvement of Civil Legislation. Awarded a Diploma of Merit of the President of the Russian Federation. Honorary Doctor of SPbUHSS.

² *Кант И.* Сочинения на немецком и русском языках. М., 2001. Т. 4 : Критика способности суждения. Первое введение в «Критику способности суждения». С. 429.

³ *Соловьев Э. Ю.* Категорический императив нравственности и права. М., 2005. С. 284.

a world order along their own lines. All this has weakened the UN and strengthened the position of right-wing conservatives in the United States.

A seemingly regular American journalist, Robert Kagan, published an essay “Americans come from Mars, Europeans from Venus.” This essay, which was originally to be titled “Strength and Weakness,” was actually turned into a national security doctrine by the Bush Jr.¹ This was facilitated by Victoria Nuland, wife of Robert Kagan.

Kagan distinguished between Americans, whom he called followers of Hobbes (recall his Leviathan, the symbol of the state), and Europeans, whom he called Kantians (probably for their belief in human rights, the “perpetual peace” project, and the “world state”).

In his essay, Kagan mocks the following ideas popular in Europe:

- that the victory over Nazi Germany was achieved thanks to the efforts of the Red Army, which had suffered enormous losses;

- that the social constitution and economic success (of European countries) have a power of appeal and should therefore be the main factors of “soft, non-military power,” which will provide Europeans with influence in the world;

- the pacifism cultivated in Germany;

- the idea of building a European military force in Europe independent of NATO.²

It was Kagan who championed realism in international relations and criticized idealism in foreign policy.

Let us return to the evaluation of the Kantian project for the constitutionalization of international relations in Europe.

Obviously, the model of one world-wide republic, a world state community, is a project for the distant future, if feasible in principle.

In Europe, they followed the path of the union of states – the European Union, to which Ukraine was also promised accession. But even the idea of “Europe of different speeds” does not help resolve to accept Ukraine into this Union. Turkey has been “at the entrance” for years; it is not allowed in, even though it is a member of NATO.

Kant’s project is being adapted to the specific political interests that are far from altruistic; this can be proved by the following facts: it was necessary to place NATO military bases (and essentially the U.S. bases) on the perimeter of the USSR; Turkey is accepted into NATO, but, given its religious composition and keeping in mind the imperial past of this country, it is unlikely to become a member of the European Union and remains, since 1964, in the status of an associated member.

So the pace of expansion of the Union and the speed of progress toward a new bright future for the humanity, as was the case with the project of building communism in a single country, proved to be overly optimistic, which means – erroneous.

But the most serious difficulties for the future project of perpetual peace are created by the “hegemonic power” which, in the spirit of notorious realism, and in fact in the spirit of egoism, manipulates the Union. In a snap of the fingers, Britain resorted to Brexit; the EU Constitution failed to be adopted.

The most destructive force that Kant failed to anticipate, though, was the doctrine of *unilateralism*, which emerged under President Bush the Younger. In September 2002, he released a new security doctrine in which he announced the right to launch a preventive military strike, the need

for which is determined at the sole discretion of the United States.

And in his State of the Nation speech on January 28, 2003, he said that if the UN Security Council did not agree to military action against Iraq, no matter how justified, then the United States, if necessary, would disregard the prohibition on violence solidified in the UN Charter.³ (He said the following: “...the course of this nation does not depend on the decisions of others.”)

Unilateralism is not just a deeply conspired concept, but a practice that defines the U.S. relations with other countries, based on new digital technical capabilities, international, and in fact U.S.-established financial institutions like the World Bank, legal institutions promoted in other countries (like the institution of punitive compensation to protect the interests of American rights holders, which has been implemented throughout the “developing world” with the help of American diplomacy). Besides, there is the practice of stigmatizing countries as pariahs, empires of evil.

The doctrine of unilateralism consists of several components, including the military and normative. The first underlies a strategy for the use of military force, dismissing Kant’s dreams as empty idealism. The second component is essentially a tactic of cynical use of the popular idea of human rights. Why propose any other normative goals when it is already clear that human rights must be respected in every country *at all costs*, without regard to the cultural identity?

Liberal fundamentalism has been parasitizing on Kant’s ideas about the most sacred thing on earth, essentially denigrating and radically rejecting other moral attitudes.

In the end, paradoxically, the dialogue of cultures is using the language of guns.

What is happening in the world right now is the conflict of cultures that William Shakespeare foresaw. The play *The Merchant of Venice*, written at the very end of the 16th century, nearly 500 years ago, describes the tragedy of law, epitomized by the drama of the moneylender Shylock. The drama of his situation is that he had confidence in the law of Venice, and this almost sacred faith in the law is undermined by the trial which is described in detail by Shakespeare. The ancient Irish litigator Senchus Mor says: “There are three epochs during which all things lose their sense: a time of natural disaster, a time of general warfare, and a time when established treaties are reneged.”

The plot is based on the opposition of two people and two different cultures. The Western culture is embodied by the rich merchant Antonio, and the Eastern culture by the moneylender Shylock, an alien living in the Venetian ghetto (a migrant in the language of today), but still a man with a sense of dignity. His dignity is trampled by Antonio, who spits in his face in public only because he is of different blood. The arrogance of the European is the main reason for the conflict between two people, two cultures. Shylock is guided by revenge when he utters the famous phrase: “The villainy you teach me, I will execute.”

The author has done his best to make the reader hate the moneylender Shylock, but the reader living 500 years later may surmise that the real reason for the drama is arrogance. Shakespeare seems to have described all the vices and virtues of men, as if intending to prove that nothing changes in the world – there will always be Shylocks and Antonios.

The haunting contradiction of cultures born of the haunting arrogance is what the ever-relevant Shakespeare warned mankind about.

¹ Хабармас Ю. Расколотый Запад. М., 2008. С. 77–102.

² Ibid.

³ Хабармас Ю. Op. cit. С. 171–175.