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Making Pacifism Plausible

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ABSTRACT *The ethics of war is a minefield. It is a morass of conceptual unclarity, contentious assumptions, impassioned arguments, unexploded myths, and the injured defenders of indistinct positions. My aim is to help to make the minefield (conceptually) safe, and to assist that most vulnerable party to the dispute, the pacifist. In this paper I explore the possibility that, far from being naïve or outlandish, pacifism might follow from a widely-held and fundamental intuition about the moral status of persons [hereafter MSP]. In Section 1 I describe MSP, and suggest how we might draw implications from it about the ethics of war. In Section 2, I argue that a 'presumption of war-ism' has distorted debate in the ethics of war: to arrive at a balanced view, we need distinguish two sets of moral questions. First, can the development and maintenance of the means to make war be justified? Second, can the use of those means ever be justified? I sketch some strategies which might be developed in addressing the first question, concentrating on what MSP suggests might be wrong with setting up a war-machine, and with being or employing a soldier. In Section 3 I argue that even if considerations from Section 2 are insufficient to establish that we must dismantle our war-machines, facts about war which conflict with MSP do establish that we must never use them.*

Introduction

First, some terminology. By 'war' I mean the violent action of one state upon another for the sake of a political end; by 'violence', action which causes physical harm to its victims, who are irreducibly physically individual persons. 'Pacifism' is the view that war is always morally wrong; and, for want of any other word, I use 'war-ism' to denote the position it opposes, that war may sometimes be morally justified [1]. I use the term 'war-machine' to refer to the institutions necessary for it to be possible to make war — systems of military expertise, armies of trained soldiers, systems for the research and development of weapons.

These definitions immediately limit my brief. Because my concern is with war as a state-state relation, I do not consider the moral status of other 'armed conflicts', whether these be guerrilla wars, tribal conflicts or conflicts between neighbouring groups individuated in some other way. Because my concern is with the morality of war insofar as it is *violent*, rather than lethal (see the discussion of Cochran and Norman, below) or merely coercive, I do not argue for pacifism from the wrongness of *killing* in particular; and nor do my arguments have any direct implications for the moral status of wars conducted in other, non-violent ways. Because I take it that violence is a phenomenon which depends on the reality of individual persons, I neither exploit nor directly criticise those strategies in the ethics of war which claim an analogy between individual violent action and collective violent action. I simply assume that where the

state violence of war is to be justified, it is justification for harms to particular persons that is required. The plausibility of this assumption must be measured against the plausibility of any alternative. And because my concern is with the *moral* status of war, my arguments have no effect on so-called 'realist' claims, that war is justified or simply required by considerations other than moral ones — political, economic or even biological. In common with most parties, I assume that it is *moral* justification we seek for war, so as to defend it to our electorates and our children.

War-ism is very firmly institutionalised. Intuition in favour of (at least) defence against tyranny is entrenched and widespread, and intuition in favour of humanitarian intervention is strong and growing. In a context like this, pacifism is on the back foot. We might call this set-up, following Flew, 'the presumption of war-ism' [2]. Very few contemporary Anglo-American philosophers challenge it. Duane Cady is almost unique in the effort he has made to develop a nuanced attack on war-ism [3]. He explores the continuity between just-war thinking and pacifist thinking, and argues that there is no sharp distinction to be drawn; he also develops a rich notion of the 'positive peace' of pacifism, as more than mere absence of conflict, and uses this to argue war-ism is problematic in its proposal that we should (or even can) use violence to achieve peace thus understood. Other writers who sympathise with pacifism include Richard Norman, John Rawls, Jonathan Glover, Jenny Teichman and Nicholas Denyer [4]. But all fall short of an argued endorsement of the position. Norman prefers to think of himself as a 'pacificist' — someone who morally disapproves of war, but believes that in some contexts it is a morally defensible course of action. Rawls, Glover and Teichman are most sympathetic with a position they call 'contingent' pacifism, which holds that although a just war is in principle possible, facts about modern weaponry etc. make it a matter of practical — thus, contingent — impossibility that such a war could ever take place. In contrast, the pacifism which may follow from a basic moral intuition about persons, MSP, is not *contingent* — it depends on essential features of state-state war, such as its reliance on a war-machine, its use of soldiers, and its violence.

1. A Familiar Intuition about the Moral Status of Persons

The homely intuition with which my arguments begin is this: persons have a certain moral status, and they have it because they are persons. Wherever they go, whoever they are with, persons matter morally as much, and in the same way, as each other [5]. I shall not argue for this intuition (hereafter MSP). Rather, I shall explore what follows for the ethics of war if we take it to be true, and require ourselves to act in accordance with it. I think it makes the moral justification of war impossible. Thus, in the jargon of traditional debate, it excludes the possibility of a just war, and establishes the truth of pacifism [6].

What is the status of MSP? When I set out to explore the possibility that the truth of MSP implies the truth of pacifism, I rely on the thought that we — readers of this paper, policy-makers and ordinary people — find MSP more plausible and important, than we do any claim which conflicts with it. It is only our unreflective habitual commitment to war-ist politics, which prevents us from seeing just how and to what extent war-ism is in tension with our commitment to MSP. My suggestion in this

paper is that, once we begin to make this faultline in our moral thinking explicit, pacifist claims will come to seem much more compelling to us.

It might be asked how MSP is related to views about the moral status of persons enshrined in the major moral theories. We could say that MSP combines the separate thoughts about persons which utilitarianism and Kantianism make central. But it would better reflect the priorities of this approach to put it thus: utilitarianism and Kantianism pull apart thoughts which naturally arise together in our ordinary and evolving folk-conception of the way in which persons matter. The utilitarian emphasises that all persons matter as much as each other; the Kantian that certain things may not be done to persons. The utilitarian introduces a problematic idea, which does not follow from the basic thought captured in MSP, that one person's well-being can be traded for the well-being of another; the Kantian disagrees, insisting that this may absolutely never be done. Neither the tradeability idea in utilitarianism, nor its absolutist denial in Kantianism, is intuitive. Accordingly, in what follows I shall assume that the tradeability question is an open one, and endeavour to ensure that my the arguments do not rely on presupposing a conclusion either way. I want to rest the weight of argument here not on any utilitarian or Kantian credentials which MSP might share in, but on the familiarity and plausibility of MSP in our moral community, and the moral repugnance of rejecting it.

2. The Presumption of War-ism

How does the presumption of war-ism look in the light of MSP? War is supposed to offer the only answer to a problem — the problem of international injustice, which may be expansionist (the war will be defensive), or simply powerful within its own community (the war will be interventionist and humanitarian) [7]. This situation is commonly thought to present a decisive challenge to the pacifist. It is first supposed that we have here a single question. We have the means to make war — our war-machine — and Hitler (or similar) is threatening us. The question is: 'Now shall we use our war-machine?'; the pacifist is anyone who answers 'No'. But this question — and not just the war-machine! — is loaded in favour of war-ism. As it is posed, it relies on presuppositions about the nature of communities (they have war-machines) and their relations (they may justly ignore each other unless extraordinarily provoked) which a consistent thinker who is committed to MSP will need to consider and revise. Far from being the defining question in the ethics of war, the 'Hitler's coming!' type of question can arise only at the end of a long series of questions, to which war-ist answers have already been given.

For his solution to be plausible, the war-ist must suppose that the problem of international injustice is an external problem. This thought emerges from a certain kind of communitarianism: it holds that membership of community makes a difference to moral status. Given this assumption, it seems natural that moral requirements for action by states not yet affected by the problem should be initially extremely lax; and that once the problem begins to threaten the security of our home state, moral requirements should be extremely permissive. Initially, in the war-ist scheme, we are not required to do anything at all in response to the presence of a tyrant in another community. It seems obvious, to this way of thinking, that the emergence of a Hitler or

a Saddam Hussein imposes no moral requirements on 'us', the members of another, separate political and moral community, and that we should allow our interactions with such communities to be guided by political or economic rather than moral considerations. On this communitarian view, *our* tyrants are our problem, and *their* tyrants are their problem. Initially, we need do nothing about 'their' political problems; later, if we are threatened, we may do just about anything to eliminate the threat.

But seen in the light of MSP, this model of relations between communities looks quite wrong. First it requires too little from members of the community of nations, and then it permits them too much. It follows simply from MSP, that if tyranny affects persons, it is the concern of persons everywhere. The *location* of the tyrant, and *which people* he tyrannises, make no moral difference to what may or should be done to him; to what may or should be done to members of the afflicted community. Whether we have Saddam Hussein accumulating power in the Gulf, or John Smith accumulating power in Grimsby, we have a moral duty grounded in MSP to take political and legal steps to deal with the (international) problem of injustice as soon as it arises, wherever it arises and whoever it affects. Notice that this isn't just pious talk of universal human rights — MSP reflects the way that our *actual moral connections* cross community boundaries in the way described. For example, I might be a travelling salesman, with family and friends living in the Gulf. In that case, the sense in which tyranny in the Gulf *matters* will be much more readily cognitively and emotionally accessible to me, than the sense in which tyranny in Grimsby should matter because it is happening within the boundaries of the state in which I am a voting citizen [8].

Nothing is claimed here about how strong the requirement to deal with tyranny is — whether, for example, it is as important for the British government to respond to the crisis of the collapse of political sovereignty in Zaire as it is for them to respond to the state-injustice that afflicts Burma; or whether Britain is more responsible than Albania in these contexts. These are questions for which there are no ready answers — policy has to be made, rather than discovered. The point is that MSP deprives us of an option we continue to presume: we cannot make a moral distinction between internal and external problems; a boundary cannot of itself reduce moral responsibility, and so can no longer be given on its own either as a reason for the neglect of a moral problem, or as a justification for a response to a moral problem which would not be permissible in the internal case.

That war-ism latterly permits 'too much', in the form of the unjustifiable violence against the community in which a tyrant is dominant, is, from a pacifist point of view, a direct consequence of its initially requiring too little. If we are morally required from the outset to deal with tyranny as, when and wherever it arises, we should never be in the position in which the 'Hitler's coming!' question arises. It is not just that pacifism would deprive us of the option of war; it is that as pacifists we will not need it, just as we do not think that we need a war-machine and its deployment to deal with the 'internal' problem of political injustice when that arises. So we see that MSP deprives us of one resource we might have called upon to support the presumption of war-ism, the internal/external distinction. What effect will it have on something else which covertly buttresses the presumption, the war-machine?

Can we be committed to MSP and justifiably develop and maintain *the means* to fight wars? There is no analogy to this question in other applied-ethical contexts where the rights and wrongs of violence or killing are debated. We cannot, for euthanasia,

separate the question of whether we should have *the capacity* to perform euthanasia, from the question of whether or not we should perform it. The capacity is given. But war-machines are not given. Soldierly expertise and weapons technology, from battering-rams to guns to nuclear missiles and fighter jets, are made, and so moral questions arise, about whether we should make them. Commitment to MSP implies that we cannot set up a war-machine if it involves us in failing to value all persons fully and equally as persons. If we are concerned about the well-being of the community whose support we fund, and aim to maximise well-being, would we do best to house, educate and heal our citizens, or should we rather acquire the capacity to defend them or crusade for them against external Hitlers? This was the way Costa Rica made the decision to abolish their war-machine in 1948, and Haiti is making it now. If we consider the function of the proposed war-machine, we might doubt whether it is morally permissible to imagine, create and plan to use skills and devices destructive of human life. Or we might focus on the community and its elected leaders, and ask whether a community can justly use persons to produce the mechanisms of war. We might think tactically, and consider whether, on balance, we think we can in fact make the world safer by institutionalising the power to massive harm through our war-machine, when the distinction between defensive and offensive arming is a matter of trust in each other's intentions, and trust is evidently so fragile.

So MSP obliges us to be doubtful even about the moral acceptability of developing and maintaining the inanimate machinery for making war: it diverts resources, involves the imagination of wicked deeds and the creation of dangerous objects, and it threatens others. What are the implications of MSP for that other essential part of the war-machine, the army of soldiers?

Soldiers, of course, are persons — they come directly within the class of things to which MSP refers. There are two aspects to this: what MSP permits or requires persons to do or be; and what MSP permits us to expect from or do to other persons. On both counts, seen in the light of MSP the position of the soldier faces profound moral problems. A soldier is traditionally conceived as an unquestioning defender unto death of his community. But our commitment to MSP involves something like the thought that as persons, we bear inalienable *responsibility* for our moral agency. Now, this means that a person cannot morally consent to do things for which they will not be morally responsible. But is this not precisely what the soldier attempts to do? The soldier, by volunteering his unquestioning loyalty and obedience, can be seen to seek to displace responsibility for his actions onto anybody else — his commander, his government, the people of his community. But to be a moral person in the sense of MSP, he must take moral responsibility for his every action. This means he has to know what he is doing and why he is doing it, such that he is satisfied that justifications are available. So MSP means that no-one can any longer consent to *be* a soldier as traditionally conceived. *Either* the consent fails, and the soldier, contrary to appearances (and to the moral pretence of the community!) retains moral responsibility and is culpable to the extent that they act in ways that they may not judge to be justified; *or* the consent succeeds, and they cease thereby to be moral persons. The inalienability of moral responsibility entailed by MSP may not matter for actions which are not especially morally significant — blind obedience to the state in guiding traffic, for example, might count as an innocuous example of this failing. But in cases where the attempt to alienate responsibility involves the agent in activities with uncontentiously

considerable moral significance, like killing, harming and coercing, their moral failing is anything but innocuous; and their culture's failure to make the moral problem explicit is anything but a forgivable oversight.

What about those who employ soldiers — is what they do permissible from the standpoint of MSP? MSP constrains what we — the commander, the government or fellow-citizens — can morally require a person to do for us. We cannot morally *require* anybody to do anything for us that is not morally permissible for them. If the above argument is right, a person morally cannot alienate their responsibility for morally significant actions. It follows that we cannot ask them to do so, either. So, employing soldiers is morally wrong. Recruiting soldiers is morally wrong, and paying taxes to be used for either of the above purposes is wrong too. In conclusion, we have made explicit what contemporary defenders of the just war appear not to see: that commitment to MSP deprives us of justification for several features of the institution of war — we cannot use an internal/external distinction to limit our moral responsibilities for persons; we cannot go ahead and install or maintain our war-machine without asking whether it is wasteful, corrupting or threatening, and we cannot justifiably *ourselves consent* to be soldiers, and nor can we justifiably *require others* to be soldiers for us. So, our commitment to MSP may oblige us to dismantle our war machine and send our soldiers home. But even if ways can be found of making the maintenance of a war-machine consistent with MSP, I think MSP still makes it morally impossible for us ever to use one. This is because MSP implies that, as persons, 'enemies' — even soldiers — matter as much and in the same way as any other persons. It follows that moral justifications for our treatment of them will have to meet the same requirements as justifications for the ways we treat 'our own' people. I argue in the next section that facts about war make this impossible.

3. Harming the Enemy: Justifying Violence against Persons

MSP implies that the same kinds of considerations will be required to justify actions on political enemies, as are required to justify actions on any other persons. In war, the action we are morally concerned with is violent. What does moral justification of violence require? There are two stages to the justification of violence which need to be distinguished, and which have important implications for the ethics of war. First, there are the *formal* requirements for the justification of violence. These describe what has to be in place for it to be even in principle *possible* to justify a violent action. The formal requirement can be expressed roughly in the following schema for a justification sentence (JS):

JS It will be justifiable to harm x, iff it is true of x that $\{p \vee q \vee r \vee \dots\}$
(In this notation, 'iff' means 'if and only if' and '$\vee$' means 'or'.)

Notice that JS has so far imposed no constraints at all on how p or q or r or . . . need to be filled in to yield a true JS. For all we know so far, it might be possible to justify harming x, provided it is true of them that they pick their nose, love pigeons or have blue eyes. When we add MSP to JS, we put ourselves in a position to begin to spell out what a morally acceptable content for p or q or r now might be. Roughly, facts about what a person *has done*, or what they *intend to do*, are the kinds of facts that MSP

enables us to use to justify harms against persons. (It is this distinguishes the moral requirements of MSP from, say, those of ideologies like racism, which characteristically claim that features which have nothing to do with what a person has done or intends, like colour or ethnicity, may justify harms.) MSP, then, implies that violence against a person can only be justifiable either when they are guilty of some transgression (this expresses our intuition about the justifiability of punitive violence), or when they are actively threatening some transgression (this expresses our intuition about the justifiability of violence in self-defence). But notice that these constraints on p or q or r, are still pretty much *formal* conditions — they have said nothing yet about *what kind of action* is to be counted as a transgression or intention grave enough to justify a violent act. So far, we have claimed that we think it will only be *possible* in principle to justify violence against a person, if they are known to have done or to threaten a transgression which, in the view of the consensus of the moral community, is sufficiently grave.

It is often assumed in writing about the ethics of war that the pacifist must be committed to some actual specific claim, about what a transgressor must have done or must intend for violence against them to be justifiable. Thus, 'absolutist pacifists' are identified as those who stipulate that violence against persons can never be justified (i.e., no possible p or q or r, could yield a true JS); Richard Norman argues that the most plausible form of pacifism will be one that stipulates that killing can only be justified when a life is taken or threatened [9]; and David Cochran, drawing on others' work, argues similarly that only threats to life can justify the taking of life (which in addition must never be directly intended and always be a last resort): that a JS justifying killing in war would have to look something like the following:

JS(1) It will be justifiable to kill x iff {p: we do not intend to kill x & q: we have tried everything else to stop x & r: x intends our death} [10]

He then argues for pacifism on the grounds that this JS is never satisfied in war. But the conclusion against war can be established more simply at the formal level, I think. If we can argue from the requirements for the justification of violence *per se* — the formal features of JS — to the wrong of war, we will establish its immorality more decisively that way. We do not need to make specific claims about the content of the justifiers in JS — we do not need to say precisely *which* transgressions must have been done or be threatened, for a justification sentence to work. We are then in a position to see the non-formal specification of transgressions in its proper light — as an essentially contestable matter for the moral community to decide. Although the moral community may *aspire* to agreement about which wrongs can justify violent responses, agreement about this is still far from being attained. And it is equally important to appreciate that this lack of consensus does not put any obstacles in the way of our developing effective arguments against war.

In a morally significant number of cases in war, I suggest, no JS can be filled in. If this is right, the process of moral justification cannot even begin, and the pacifist can rest her case. I would make this claim in particular about the indiscriminate violence of war, for which the term 'bombings' may serve. Most of the 'bombing' violence that goes on in war is in principle incapable of justification. It is not that a particular JS cannot be filled in (as in Cochran's argument); it is that no JS at all can be given for such contexts, because *nothing* which could reasonably be used to fill in p or q or r, is known to the agent who is doing the harm. Soldiers who drop bombs and spray

ammunition commonly do not know *anything* about the persons they harm; not even what uniform they are wearing. In bombing, then, the moral problem is that we cannot meet even the minimal formal requirements for moral justification.

It might be objected that this argument illicitly relies on a Kantian answer to the tradeability question mentioned in Section 1 — that in supposing that to justify violence against a person you need to know facts about what they have done or intend, I have excluded the real (utilitarian) possibility that we might know that good consequences will emerge from bombing a group of people (say, their government will give up, shortening the conflict), and that this is sufficient to justify the bombing. I don't think that my argument relies on a Kantian thought here. What is sought, is a moral justification for the violent acts constituting war — specifically, here, indiscriminate violent acts. These acts are individuated, and identified as violent, by the damage they do to particular bodily persons. So, we need *moral* answers to the question, 'Why was *she* harmed?' My point is that, in bombing cases, no *moral* answer to that question is available. The utilitarian answer at best provides us with an explanation of her death — she died because she was in the wrong place at the wrong time. It does not, and *cannot*, tell us how and why it was *right* to harm *her*.

But what of the other cases in war, where it seems that we do know enough about those who are harming and those who are harmed, to offer a viable JS? Any filling will have to satisfy the additional formal constraints supplied by MSP — that is, it will have to refer to the *actions and intentions* of proposed victims. This immediately protects from possibly justifiable harm the vast majority of victims in war: those wearing certain clothes; those who say certain things; those who happen to live near military installations; those who are conscripted against their will; those who are forced into aggression by hunger, other deprivation or ignorance. Plenty of authors have noted just how widely the notion of 'innocence' extends in war, and just how tightly it constrains who may justifiably be harmed (Nick Denyer, again, is notable here). It is commonly thought that facts about the inevitability of harming the innocent furnish the most decisive grounds for the rejection of war. But I think we can go further than this. We can say, not only that war is bad because it involves harming the innocent, but also that even in cases where the 'guilty' (or 'nocent', in Denyer's phrase) — those implicated in the enemy state's unjust projects in the right way — are harmed, the relation between the agents and victims of violence is usually not of the right kind to justify the violence under the description required, if it is as part of a *war between states*, rather than as a harm to an individual, that we need to justify the act. The moral problem here, in contrast with the bombing case above, is not so much that we cannot meet the formal requirements for justification, as that any true JS we can come up with will not be apt to justify the violent act as part of the political process of a particular war.

It is natural to think that violence between soldiers offers a paradigm of violence in war which can be justified, if any can be. Even in the light of MSP, it looks as if harms to enemy soldiers as they attack will be morally justifiable; and it seems to follow that if war-making can be refined so that only soldiers are ever attacked, then war as such will be justifiable. But this thought does not survive scrutiny. Consider the individual soldiers of two armies engaged in direct violent conflict on a battlefield. All are armed, all directly threatening, all can see each other. Is there here a relation between each soldier and the soldiers he kills, such that a true JS can be produced, which meets the constraints of MSP, so that the violence may be justified? Does our soldier know that

the enemy he faces is either guilty of a transgression, or threatens one? It seems clear that he does: while he does not know anything about the soldier's past, about his connections with the intentions of the community he defends — that is, he knows nothing about the enemy soldier's involvement with the state he represents — he certainly does know what he threatens, namely, our soldier's life itself. His violent act of self-defence against the enemy soldier, then, is justifiable: a true JS can be given, that satisfies the requirements of MSP.

But if we look at this relation more closely, we see that it does not yet give us what we need to justify the violence as a part of the *war* — the collective activity of the whole army for the political ends of the state it represents. The violence that the soldier's knowledge here makes justifiable is only that of individual self-defence. Our soldier in the decisive moment knows that he will be killed if he does not kill. But our soldier cannot know that his opponent deserves violence for his part in the enemy state's projects. So if he kills justifiably, as an irreducibly responsible human agent, he can do so only in self-defence (or perhaps to punish the harms he has seen the soldier inflict on others). His act of violence, then, is not and cannot be justified by a JS of the form:

JS(2) It is justifiable to harm x because it is true of x that {x has done or threatens to do something as a responsible member of the enemy state}

The only justification we can get, will be one that goes:

JS(3) It is justifiable to harm x because it is true of x that {x has harmed or intends to harm other persons}

So, what we see on the battlefield, far from being the most justifiable violence of all in war, is the most unjustifiable, from the point of view of the political aims of the states involved: it amounts to a mass of chaotic self-defensive killing in ignorance, which has as little necessary connection with the rational intentions of the communities these soldiers represent, as any riot or bar-room brawl.

David Cochran also thinks that no satisfactory JS can be produced for soldier-soldier harms. But this is because of the content he stipulates that p and q and r must have. His argument at once permits too much — when it fails to exclude non-lethal violence — and too little — when it denies that soldier-soldier violence is morally justified *at all*. We need not follow Cochran in making the implausible claim that the soldier, threatened with death, is not justified in killing. Instead, we can allow that a justification-sentence can be produced for soldier-soldier harms, but note that it is simply not apt to serve as part of the justification of a *war*, conceived as a relation between states rather than between individual persons. Facts about the state do not need to feature — and because of the heavy epistemic constraints of the battlefield context, never can feature — in the statements used to justify soldier-soldier harms.

There are three responses the war-ist might make. First, he might deny that the only available justifiers refer to personal threat. He might say that the battlefield context itself supplies the further level of information required to yield justifiers apt to justify a war: the soldier who threatens our soldier's life is an *enemy* soldier; the enemy is engaged in an attempt to destroy our community. To this I can only repeat the opposing intuition: in a battlefield context, with its characteristic threat of death, it is impossible to know of the enemy one faces that he is responsible and implicated in the state's projects. This whole argument is a roundabout way of making a simple point:

the battlefield is not just a poor context for arrest, proof of guilt, trial and imposition of just penalty; it is a context that makes a mockery of all those ideas.

Second the war-ist might draw on the individual/state analogy to develop a satisfactory justification-sentence [11]. He might argue that we do not need information about every individual victim to make violence against them justifiable. Rather, we can establish the guilt of the enemy collective community prior to battle. We then infer guilt from community membership, which we establish for every individual from facts like the wearing of certain uniform, or being present in a certain location. This, it is hoped, will enable us to justify our harms indirectly. But, of course, MSP places these strategies beyond our moral reach: such features as membership of a collective, clothing, equipment and location make no difference to the moral status of a person; they do nothing to reduce the particular demand for moral consideration which made by each individual. It follows that such justifiers as 'he is a member of the enemy state (and we know this because he wears enemy uniform)' cannot be used in any true JS which meets the constraints of MSP. In fact, any attempt to justify harms in this way manifests a grave failure in moral sensibility. If our victim only looks like a member of a bad collective, then when we harm her we make her a scapegoat, and this is simply wicked.

Third, the war-ist might try to justify harms to soldiers by saying that although our individual soldier does not know that the enemies he faces are guilty or threatening in the relevant political sense, the officers, strategists and politicians who are the responsible agents in war *do* know about the distribution of guilt, and this makes soldier-soldier harms justifiable. Although the soldier knows not what he does, the authorities whom he obeys do know, and take full moral responsibility for his actions; and accordingly, it is facts about them which make justification possible. My response, as to the previous argument, will be obvious: it violates the moral requirements of irreducible responsibility for individual agents entailed by MSP above. The soldier is inalienably a moral person, not a machine. If what he does is not justifiable as the act of an individual moral person, it is not justifiable at all, any more than the acts of a psychopath or a machine could be. And any attempt to use him to undertake actions not justifiable in the requisite way, represents a violation of his autonomy of a very serious kind, as I argued earlier. We might also add another thought that is obvious: authorities in war, necessarily removed as they are from the realities of the battlefield, are unlikely to know very much that is morally salient about the enemy soldiers it is proposed we should harm. They will not know of any particular soldier whether he has been coerced, say. So even if we accepted justification-sentences which went up a level, we would have to throw most of them out for the same reason: no information, or no morally relevant information, or no politically salient information of the kind apt to justify a war (and not just any old self-defensive harm).

4. Conclusion: Pacifism . . . with Hit-Squads?

So, someone committed to MSP will be inclined to think it impermissible to set up a war-machine, for a range of reasons, including those outlined above. She will think that we are morally required to attend to tyranny before it threatens to invade; and that we cannot justifiably use or agree to be used as soldiers. She will also think that killing the innocent in war is wrong, that indiscriminate violence in war is chaotic and so in

principle unjustifiable; and, further, that even the discriminate violence between soldiers in war is usually not justifiable in the way required to justify war. In short, she will be a pacifist, pending the presentation of more persuasive arguments for war-ism. But she will also recognise that, even in wars as presently conducted, there will be a small category of violent actions, amid all the evil and chaos, which might be morally justifiable. These will be targeted acts of violent punishment or prevention against members of an enemy state who are known to be responsible for grave wrongs. So, we should notice that the MSP-pacifist need not exclude as a moral option for a good state, the setting up of some kind of coercive machinery for dealing with this kind of international injustice when and where it arises. The only moral constraints are that such a system — analogous, of course, to a police system, as anti-war pacifists have long argued — should not use persons to perform violent acts which they, as responsible individual agents, know *a priori* to be unjustifiable; and it may only use mechanisms of violence which are fully discriminate. So, it is thus far conceivable that a defender of MSP should support a pacifist system of international relations which permits targeted disabling violent interventions into tyrannical power-systems wherever they arise. Richard Norman hints at something similar, when he notes that all attempts to justify war seem to end up failing to justify *that*, but perhaps making justifiable something more modest and targeted, like a campaign of assassination. I add to this the thought that what we have here is not so much a recommendation for a new kind of *war*, but the adoption of a consistent anti-war pacifism. Developing a plausible pacifism here has involved taking MSP to be true, and seeing what it permits and what it prescribes. It does not permit war, nor yet even the development and maintenance of the means for threatening war (the 'war-machine'). It prescribes inter- and intra-national political engagement to deal with international injustice wherever it arises. But it there is no moral reason why it cannot permit the use of perfectly discriminate, targeted violence for which the agents can be held morally responsible, in dealing with international injustice. A plausible pacifism, then, might well be one that condones the use of hit-squads. And maybe this is just what we need to make pacifism more popular — a show of strength; a few public executions . . .

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NOTES

[1] Note that the war-ist here is not yet someone who thinks that war is ever a positive good — he is just someone who thinks that in some contexts it can be justified. Martin Ceadel (1987) *Thinking About Peace and War* (Oxford, OUP) distinguishes five positions within the ethics of war, from militarism (war is a positive human good), to absolutist pacifism (no violence whatsoever can be justified). I am here interested in a simpler two-way distinction, between those who think war is sometimes defensible — 'war-ists' — and those who think it never is — pacifists. Duane L. Cady (1989) *From Warism to Pacifism: A Moral Continuum* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press) and elsewhere, has coined the same term (without the hyphen), for much the same purpose. Some have suggested that the term 'bellicist' would be more apt. But it has a current use which picks out a distinct position of its own — a fatalistic acceptance of war, prior to the distinction between defence and offence within the institution. See Ceadel, op. cit., p. 12.

[2] Antony Flew (1976) *The Presumption of Atheism* (London, Elek/Pemberton).

[3] Cady, op. cit.

[4] Richard Norman (1988) The case for pacifism *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 5, pp. 197–210; John Rawls (1971) *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard), §58; Jonathan Glover (1977) *Causing Death and Saving Lives* (London, Pelican); Jenny Teichman (1986) *Pacifism and the Just War* (Oxford, Blackwell); Nicholas Denyer, (2000) Just War in Roger Teichman (ed.) *Logic, Cause and Action* (London/Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), pp. 137–151.

[5] This intuition does not to say that we cannot rationally make any moral distinctions based on considerations that don't affect personhood — community membership, say. We justly make a distinction between refugees and citizens, for example, to enable us to meet the special needs of refugees. But such distinctions between persons as are morally acceptable to us today, all rest on the bedrock of the basic intuition about their moral status as persons. This contrasts with historic discriminations, such as enslavement and patriarchy, where it was precisely the personhood of those who are discriminated against that was denied, and this denial used to justify discrimination.

[6] Denyer, op. cit., gestures in the direction of a similar thought about how pacifism follows from basic moral convictions, but the idea is not developed. At the end of his paper Denyer concludes that our basic moral intuitions about 'the immunity of the innocent' and the 'munity of the nocent' (i.e., who may justly be harmed), clash with any workable law of war which could be used to decide who may be harmed in a conflict, and notes that it is far from obvious that we should give up these moral intuitions. I argue for the pacifist conclusion directly, and rely on a simpler moral intuition than those he describes, which are not basic, I suggest, but can be shown to follow from MSP.

[7] There are other causes for war which have been taken to be just, of course. At the most extreme, the *militarist* — Ceadel's term — is someone who takes war to be a good and necessary manifestation of an aspect of human nature; the idea that war is somehow 'glorious', and is for those involved in fighting 'what childbirth is for women — an initiation into the power of life and death' (John Mueller (1991) War: natural but not necessary in Robert Hinde (ed.) *The Institution of War* (London, MacMillan), pp. 13–29, at p. 18) is familiar, but generally discredited. For a magisterial list, addressed to a political leader, of the kinds of justification that might be offered for making war, and strategies for making those justifications convincing, see Aristotle, *Rhetoric to Alexander*, 1425a7–b19.

[8] See Mary Kaldor (1991) Do Modern Economies Require War or Preparations for Warfare? in Robert Hinde (ed.) *The Institution of War* (London, MacMillan), pp. 178–91, at p. 190, for an optimistic account of how the rise of international community may obviate the need for war as a means to focusing political power.

[9] Norman, op. cit.

[10] Cochran, op. cit. Note how Cochran's argument excludes from possible justification all punitive violence; at the same time as it leaves open the possibility of justification for any or all non-lethal harm.

[11] Much discussion in the ethics of war revolves around aspects of the individual/state analogy, which I do not discuss, because it is simply inconsistent with MSP. Norman (op. cit.) makes a particularly good job, I think, of arguing that the analogy between individual self-defence, and defence of a community's integrity, on which Michael Walzer (1980) *Just and Unjust Wars* (London, Penguin), relies in defending the idea of a just war, makes no sense unless one thinks of it as a response to the threat of actual extermination of (individual living members of) the group; in which case the analogy gives us no special right of self-defence for communities over and above the right of self-defence enjoyed by individuals; and so no means for justifying the practice of war.