

PART I

THE MODERNITY OF WAR

The Dream of a Modernity without Violence

Violence has currently become a focal point of widespread public debate. The depressing reasons for this are obvious. Europe is experiencing the Balkan war and its cruelties as the return of a horror that we all imagined had long since been overcome. Hoyerswerda and Rostock, Mölln and Solingen,¹ are the symbols of an eruption of violence in the midst of a reunited Germany. The bewilderment of the politicians is matched by the confusion of the majority of social scientists, from peace researchers to sociologists of youth. The traditional strengths of the social sciences have never included a preoccupation with violence within societies and violence between states, and we are now paying the price for this. Admittedly, in their comments on the politics of the day and in historical flashbacks, the founders and classics of sociology expressed their views on the causes, the course and the effect of wars, class struggles and other conflicts fought out with violence. But for the most part the relation of these statements to the systematic core of their theories remains obscure. Similarly, peace research and the study of international relations by political scientists have had little impact on the development of theory in general. Social scientists have always paid far greater attention to economic, social and political inequality than to the manifestations of violence. Even the legitimate institutions of the state monopoly of the means of violence have attracted only marginal interest from the social sciences – an astonishing fact, given their size and importance. We are indebted to Hans Paul Bahrtdt for the perceptive comment, one whose validity is by no means confined to Germany, that a scrutiny of school textbooks on social studies or introductions to sociology must give the impression that the societies we live in have neither armed forces nor police.

Studies of the police focus mainly on their treatment of individual offenders. And in general, more attention is paid to the violent behaviour of *individual* criminals than to the origins of *collective* and *state* violence. The 1993 report by the American panel on violence goes so far as to ignore the latter altogether and to revert to a biological interpretation of violent tendencies.² Analyses of collective violence frequently suffer from a misleading application of explanatory models designed to explore the origins of individual violence. They fluctuate for the most part between rationalist and irrationalist exaggerations. Some seek to present violence as the coolly selected and deployed tool of the interests of a nation or class, about which little can be said apart from its instrumentality. Others are unable to think of violence except in terms of the collapse of all social order, normative orientation and individual rationality. Admittedly, a passing increase in scholarly interest and in the number of respectable reports by committees of experts was triggered by certain spectacular public events, such as the racial disturbances of the 1960s in the USA or the radical left-wing terrorism in the German Federal Republic in the 1970s, as well as isolated outbreaks of unrest among the young. But for the most part the sociologists' interest waned as quickly as that of the general public. The deeply rooted ideas about what is relevant in the social sciences soon reasserted themselves, to the detriment of any concern with the subject of collective violence.

How can we explain this? I believe that the explanation for this curious distribution of scholarly attention lies in the close ties between Western social sciences and the world-view of liberalism. In the philosophy of liberalism, wars and violent domestic conflicts necessarily appeared as the relics of a dying age that had not yet been illuminated by the dawn of the Enlightenment. Early liberals regarded contemporary wars as the product of the aristocratic military spirit, or the uncontrolled whims of despots, and, more recently, even the First World War was perceived by American liberal intellectuals as evidence of European backwardness, in contrast to American modernity. Despotism and the aristocratic military spirit were themselves viewed as relics of primitive stages of humankind; *civilized* life ought also to be *civil*, with martial traits and needs not simply prohibited by religion and morality, but eased and sublimated into sporting or economic competition (*'le doux commerce'*).³ Even if this did not mean that the age of non-violence had been completely achieved, enlightened liberals might feel that they could see where the road was leading and what steps were needed to perfect a rational order. Just as torture and public punishments had to be banished from the realm of criminal justice, war and violence of every sort against persons and things had to be

eliminated from modern, that is, civil, society. In the modernization theory of the postwar period the non-violent resolution of conflict even became a defining feature of modernity. However, this blunt rejection of violence was accompanied by a certain tendency to underestimate its importance in the present. It allowed an optimistic gaze firmly fixed on the future to view the bad old world in its death-throes with impatience and without genuine interest.

Even classical Marxism is a descendant of this liberal world-view where this faith in the future is concerned. Admittedly, its representatives emphasized the violence implicit in the way in which the capitalist mode of production established itself, as well as the inexorable material compulsion concealed behind the façade of freely negotiated contracts and the class rule disguised by the equality of individuals. For this reason, the idea that class rule could only be overthrown by force did not weigh too heavily on its conscience, no more than the idea that even after the victory of the revolution, the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' would continue to use force to restrain its opponents for a considerable period. But in a sense, classical Marxism only extended the liberal world-view for a further epoch: after the violence required for the worldwide revolution, what was envisaged was the emergence of a social order consisting of a universal, free association of producers in which violence would no longer feature. In the final analysis, for Marxism, the end of violent social conflict was the consequence of the disappearance of divergent interests in a completely just, spontaneously self-regulating order. Since all wars or ethnic conflicts were held to be the expression of class contradictions, they would disappear along with the disappearance of class conflicts.

The real resistance to this optimistic turning away from the role of force came from anti-liberals and from those defenders of bourgeois society who were prepared, more or less without reservation, to abandon their original hopes. We should begin by mentioning the old-fashioned militarism that saw in war the father of all things and was convinced that a peaceful civilization and the disappearance of warlike virtues would lead to a general decline in morals and a rise of softness and effeminacy. This strand of thought was combined, in the course of the nineteenth century, with a tendency, borrowed from Darwin and others, to biologize social and political issues in order to justify the uninhibited competition of individuals, as well as nations, races or ethnic groups. Exponents of this kind of thinking were undoubtedly to be found among the early representatives of sociology, from Gumpłowicz and Ratzenhofer to Sumner. Significantly, however, instead of gaining inclusion in the living heritage of the discipline, they have in fact been forgotten.⁴ This contrasts with a continuous

tradition of power-political realism that without any great ideological superstructure simply treats it as an indisputable fact that states and collectives act in their own interest, and that in social conflicts they have force at their disposal and will inevitably use it. A further version of the anti-liberal attitude to the role of force occurs where old-fashioned militarism is dressed up with ideas taken from *Lebensphilosophie* or existentialism: violence as creativity, struggle as inner experience, the community of soldiers at the front as the inspiration for a new type of state order. Particularly in Germany, but by no means only there, this way of thinking plays a significant role, from Nietzsche via the so-called 'ideas of 1914' down to the National Socialist movement. Alien though this way of thinking may have become to us today, an element of actual experience is preserved here, too.

It appears, therefore, that we face the following dilemma. The Enlightenment, liberalism and also Marxism promise us a world without violence, but also lead us again and again into situations in which we are rudely awakened from our dream and are astounded by the persistence of this apparent lack of civilization. Militarism, Social Darwinism, power-political realism and the mythology of violence do indeed direct our attention to the pervasive nature of violence, but they also deprive us of all hope of a stable, peaceful world. *We can only escape from this dilemma with the aid of a process of reflection that begins (1) by undermining the self-confidence of a power-political realism, that goes on from there to a dispassionate study of the persuasive power of conceptions of peace, particularly those of liberalism (2/3), and finally (4) attempts to learn even from the mythologies of violence in order to avoid the limitations and reductionisms of traditional research into violence.*

I

Let us begin by inquiring into the empirical persuasiveness of power-political realism. Are the social sciences obliged to see the world without illusions as an eternal struggle of conflicting interests, or can sociology prove that '*realpolitik*' is itself an ideology? Are there indications of a peaceful order in the world that promise more than a temporary armistice in the midst of the eternal struggle? As an appropriate starting-point from which to answer this question, we may turn to Thomas Hobbes's thought experiment: given a state of nature in which everyone pursues only his own advantage, not shrinking from force and fraud, but also constantly aware that he may himself become the victim of fraud and violence, and can therefore never enjoy his life and his possessions in peace – how can this state of nature lead to a

peaceful and safe social order? As is well known, Hobbes's own solution was that, motivated by the fear of death, everyone would be willing to submit to a strong state or the strong will of a universally accepted ruler, and this solution became one of the basic models of modern political thought. Now, what is interesting is that almost no one noticed that in solving this problem, Hobbes only created another one. Internal peace may indeed be guaranteed by the existence of powerful, centralized states, but this merely provokes the risk of conflict between these states or leviathans! The effect of conflicts between states is to undermine again the security of the individual citizen and thus partly to demolish the attempt to justify the existence of a strong state as a response to the dangers of civil wars – if we assume that there may be a lesser risk of conflicts between weak states. Hobbes's own reaction to this problem was not wholly consistent. On the one hand, he by no means ignored the fact of wars between states; he made use of it not just as a metaphor, but as empirical proof that the state of nature he described was not just an assumed fiction, but a real, actually experienced problem. On the other hand, however, even though he had recognized with an unprecedented clarity the explosive character of the problem for life within societies, he tended to play it down at the level of relations between societies. The state of nature between states, according to Hobbes, was less problematic and less inevitable than between individuals. States, so he believed, were more capable of self-restraint, so that it was not necessary for the entire population of a state to become involved in a war. Moreover, states were stronger than individuals and hence less concerned to expand their power still further. This circumstance made the question of security between states less acute and created the possibility of an equilibrium between them. Whatever we may think of Hobbes's explanations, and whether or not we believe that they are still valid in an age of total war, it is evident that he does not propose the same solution for conflicts between states as for internal conflicts. He neither expects a centralized superstate to emerge in empirical fact, nor does he advocate it. He relies instead much more strongly on the suppression of internal aspirations towards expansion and on 'restricting war to a pure war between states' (Reinhart Koselleck). This internal contradiction in Hobbes was recognized in the peace discourse of the early Enlightenment, and for that reason thinkers in a line from the Abbé de St Pierre through Rousseau and on to Kant cast doubt on the possibility of a stable equilibrium between the powers. According to Swift, Hobbes's system resembled a building whose stability was threatened by a bird landing on the roof. For this reason St Pierre proposed that international treaties should be agreed; Rousseau was in favour of reducing the interdependence

of states and increasing their isolation and autarky, while Kant looked to links between republican constitutions and the establishing of bonds under international law as a way out of the instability that was a constant threat.⁵ These non-Hobbesian ways of thinking have in common the fact that they have been forced by Hobbes's inconsistency to return to the question of whether relations between states actually possess the extra-legal or even extra-moral character that the Hobbesian tradition attributes to them. The fact that this tradition of thought continually resurfaces shows how unclear the Hobbesian power-political realism is with its view of states as unified actors, each with an unambiguous set of interests. As a rule, we do not know what the interests of a state or a large-scale collective really are, who defines them, how this definition is arrived at, what conceptions of the world enter into it, whether power and security are conceived in an expansionist or defensive manner and whether these are mutually compatible in each individual case. For all its demonstrable resilience in the real world, power-political realism is by no means a simple reflection of reality, but rather something that arises from a programmatic de-moralization and an empirically problematic abstraction from the normative and interpretative character of reality. If we inquire not just into the causes of war, but also into the causes of peace, of available solutions to the dilemmas of security, we may well discover not just that liberal conceptions are more optimistic and normatively more attractive, but also that they are more sustainable empirically than those of power-political realism.

II

For all classical liberals, whose political goals lay in limiting state power and enhancing the scope for individual action, and who advanced from those beliefs to a positive attitude towards domestic and foreign free trade, wars were always as immoral as they were harmful. The damage they caused in the economic sphere was plain for all to see. The depopulation of entire tracts of land, the destruction of capital, the increasing burden of taxes, the growth of government debt, the shrinking of international trade, general impoverishment – these are just a few of the headings that have been used to describe the economic consequences of war and warlike regimes. But morally, too, classical liberals condemned wars as the actions of warlike classes and rulers who mindlessly inflicted death and injustice for selfish reasons – and that means a misconceived notion of their own best interests. The two oldest sociological theories maintaining that states have

the capacity for peace, theories that have been highly influential and are still worth taking seriously today, both come from the general ambit of *liberalism*. They are associated with the names of Immanuel Kant and Adam Smith. Kant had made a connection between a state's capacity for peace and its internal political structure, and arrived at the conclusion that republics are peaceable by nature. His conception of republics was concerned not with the overthrow of monarchs, but with making monarchical power constitutional and juridified. If only the well-understood interests of the citizens could be taken into account in making foreign policy decisions, this would lead to the avoidance of war and the establishment of mutually beneficial relations between states. According to Kant, it is the establishment of a legal relationship between states that fully creates the preconditions required to enable every individual to live in accordance with the imperatives of reason, even within a state, whereas a world-state would always contain the risk of a universal despotism. Adam Smith, in his turn, together with some of his predecessors (for instance, Montesquieu) and, above all, the emerging discipline of political economy, trusted in the pacifying effects of free trade. Instead of mutual threats, destruction and plundering between states, the peaceable exchange of needed goods would enhance the well-being of all participants and make war superfluous. A civilizing effect is attributed to trade between states that is greater even than in the case of domestic trade. These two conceptions could be described as the *republican* and the *utilitarian* versions of liberal thinking about peace. In reality, that is to say, in the thought of individual liberal philosophers, economists or sociologists, the two conceptions are not clearly distinguished from each other. In arguing in favour of the realistic possibility of establishing a state of peace between states, Kant has recourse to ideas taken from political economy, and Smith is by no means deaf to the need for security as a basic precondition of trade. Nevertheless, it still makes sense to talk of these two versions as separate lines of thought, since on particular issues they do give rise to different prognoses and evaluations. There is a productive tension built into the liberal discourse here. The question of whether a peaceful foreign policy is made more probable by the democratic participation of ordinary citizens, the internal rule of law or the mutual links between states created by trade is undoubtedly open to empirical exploration. The results of numerous attempts to do this are controversial in detail, but taken overall, they do not make liberal conceptions of peace look misguided and they point unanimously to the existence of a kind of special peace between liberal states. However, the present argument does not address that point. Both liberal conceptions of peace have a shadow side, as well as a bright one.

Neither is so untouched by war and conflict that it can be appealed to as an innocent idea. Both have been used to justify warlike behaviour. Now, no idea can be entirely immune to ideological misuse. But we have to inquire how far an idea actually favours misuse and how it can be modified in order to preclude it. The demonstration that these two liberal ideas of peace have their darker side is not intended as an attack on liberalism, but is concerned to explore their intellectual stock in trade in the light of the actual lessons of history.

The darker side of the *utilitarian liberal* conception of peace lies in the history of colonialism and imperialism. By this I do not mean the Leninist conception of imperialism as the logical consequence of capitalist economic practices and as the highest or even last stage of capitalism. This use of the term as a weapon with which to legitimate large-scale territorial domination by the Soviet Union, and which cast an aura of suspicion over every nation with a capitalist economy, did more to obscure the problems of international inequality in recent decades than to shed light upon them. What is meant, rather, is the ease with which liberal thinkers accommodated themselves to imperialist policies. The history of German liberalism in the Bismarck era and especially during the Wilhelminian age shows that no more than a few people articulated a critique of the economic damage caused by the state acquisition of colonies and the wasteful nature of militarism from a free-trade point of view, and that as a consequence of their criticism these commentators were relegated to the status of outsiders in the spectrum of opinion. Even those who preserved a sceptical distance from imperialist tendencies raised no objection to state support for export policies designed to gain greater economic influence abroad. What was typical of the age, however, was the tendency of liberalism and imperialism to join forces. By way of illustration, it is enough to mention such names as Friedrich Naumann and Max Weber. Britain as a model for liberals also included the idea of the exemplary ability of the British to lead an empire, politically, economically and culturally. In particular, the 'liberal imperialists' regarded 'a German imperialism as the fulfilment and logical continuation of the policy of founding the Reich'.⁶ In their eyes, domestic liberal reforms were justified not primarily in terms of values such as freedom and popular sovereignty, but as part of a process of modernization that served as the precondition of an external imperialist policy. The liberals were more conscious of the links between foreign and domestic affairs than conservatives and articulated them with greater vigour. Now, at this point it could of course be objected that the imperialism of liberals in Germany does not in itself tell us anything about the dark side of liberal thought as such,

but simply provides evidence of the weakness of liberalism in Germany and for the shallow roots of free-trade liberalism there. In Germany, it will be said, the impulse towards a politics of peace that springs from a free-trade liberalism did not really manage to assert itself. This is why it is necessary to look towards Britain, where the question of the relationship between liberalism and imperialism can be put more radically. In fact, the influence of free-trade thinking upon the peace movement was very great in Britain throughout the nineteenth century – a combination scarcely conceivable in Germany.⁷ An author like Herbert Spencer, whom current opinion might have expected to have Social Darwinist views on the relations between peoples, turns out in reality to have been among the resolute opponents of the Boer War and of British military interventions in general. This apparent hostility to imperialism on the part of leading utilitarian liberals was the basis of Joseph Schumpeter's theory of imperialism as the product not of capitalism but of pre-capitalist influences. The question thus can be narrowed down to focus on how, precisely, the same radical liberals, the orthodox representatives of political economy and Spencerism in Britain, reacted to the question of imperialism. This is the theoretical aspect of the debate about *free-trade imperialism*. The liberals were undoubtedly severe critics of the mercantilist colonialism that lasted into the early nineteenth century, but does this make them consistent anti-imperialists? A close scrutiny of their theories and opinions shows that the majority of them had at the very least built pro-imperial provisos into their theories. The industrial supremacy of Britain, of its products, production methods and opportunities for innovation, was consciously included in their calculations. The link between free trade and Britain's superiority was not just an afterthought, a contingent result, as it were, of their thinking, but was a considered and intended part of it. Their arguments in favour of free trade were not disinterested, but geared to Britain's leading role in the world, which was to be achieved by prudent, non-violent methods. This even applies to Jeremy Bentham, who, as is well known, began his essay on peace by advocating the surrender of all the colonies in the spirit of free trade. Nevertheless, he subsequently let himself be converted to regarding colonies not as a squandering of capital, but as an opportunity to invest surplus capital and to channel the outflow of excess population. His supporters and successors actively promoted imperial programmes, such as the systematic colonization and settlement of Australia and New Zealand. Friedrich List and others reacted to the ideas of free trade with the argument that the universal expansion of free trade ensured that the majority of countries would for ever remain inferior to powers

that held the leadership in industry, trade and sea-power. In making this point he fully grasped the intentions of the British theoreticians of free trade. His plea for protectionism was based on powerful reasons and, naturally, it contributed to the weakness of the utilitarian liberal conception of peace beyond Britain's frontiers. We should describe as the dark reverse side of this conception of peace the dogmatization of the idea that free trade has pacifying effects, even if it exacts the price of considerable, worldwide inequalities and imbalances. This conception of peace can only be salvaged if the potential tendencies of a liberalized economy to provoke violence are not repressed or recklessly disregarded.

III

The *republican* version of liberal thinking about peace also has its less attractive side. This lies in a proselytizing universalism that itself represents a threat to peace. This problem first surfaced as early as the generation of Kant's disciples in Germany who had come under the influence of his views on peace politics. Some of these disciples were fully in sympathy with the idea that if the revolutionary French republic wished to transform other states into republics, this could be done by force because it would assist in the propagation of peace.⁸ In their hands, most prominently in the writings of the young Joseph Görres, Kant's thinking was transformed into an ideology of intervention with the aim of 'republicanizing as many despotic states as circumstances of time and place allow' and of 'confining all republicanized states within the frontiers indicated by nature' – which we must presumably understand as a plea for the Rhine frontier.⁹ It was Carl Schmitt who best summed up this problem, which acquired renewed topicality with the steps taken by international law in the twentieth century to restrict war, the establishment of the League of Nations and other attempts at the peaceful resolution of international conflicts. For Schmitt, the core issue raised by the League of Nations, but by extension also the true meaning of the American Monroe Doctrine, is the systematic way in which the question of the procedure by which we are to decide whether an offence has been committed against international law remains open. Despite all the objections that have been rightly lodged against Schmitt's decisionism, his exaggerated concentration on the necessity of decision-making, there can be no doubt that his insistence on the importance of who makes the decisions is a legitimate question for sociologists. 'The problem does not lie', Schmitt argued in opposition to Friedrich Meinecke,

in the normative content of a moral or legal commandment, but in the question of who decides? . . . Of course, everyone wants justice, morality, ethics and peace, no one wants to do wrong; but the only interesting question *in concreto* is always who decides in each specific case what is right, what peace consists in, what the threat to peace or a breach of the peace is, how it is to be eliminated and when a situation is normal and 'pacified', etc. This *quis iudicabit* shows that within the law and the general commandment to be moral a dualism lies concealed that robs these concepts of the ability to stand up to 'power' as simple opposing principles and to swing pendulum-like towards it.¹⁰

However, an institution that permits an open-ended view of this question will allow a particular power to ensure that its own definition prevails. This means that the power to define is power in a pre-eminent sense. Schmitt sees the same danger in efforts to 'outlaw wars' by means of international agreements and in the use of international law to formulate a so-called 'discriminatory' concept of war.¹¹ What Schmitt has in mind here is the redefinition of wars into a confrontation between criminals and world police. Whereas a non-discriminatory concept of war conceives of war as a struggle between two or more states and in principle gives each participant the same opportunity to achieve legitimacy, a universalistic intention to outlaw war leads to a situation in which individual parties to a conflict are empowered to proceed against a real or supposed aggressor in the name of humanity. In this way a conflict between two different upholders of order becomes a conflict between order and disorder, the preservers of order and those who disrupt it. Schmitt backs up his fears with a creeping erosion of the concept of neutrality. Where you have a conflict between equal, sovereign states, neutrality, he maintains, is self-evidently possible. But in the dispute between police and criminal every form of behaviour must imply taking sides with order or disorder. Where the discriminatory concept of war gains the upper hand, moral inhibitions towards the enemy are said to disappear along with that enemy's legitimacy, and so does the opportunity for limiting a conflict. Wars would once again become crusades, and aim not just at victory but at the annihilation of the other side in this 'global civil war'. Whether intentionally or not, the result of attempts to institutionalize the republican liberal conception of peace was, in Schmitt's view, an ideological devaluation of the opponent and hence itself a threat to peace.

Needless to say, Schmitt's own intentions become all too clear in the course of this argument. He writes from a profound resentment towards what appears to him to be a conglomerate of Versailles, Geneva and Weimar. There is probably no point in discussing the political aims of his counter-programme: a concrete notion of an ordered

society and a new community of the European nations in line with National Socialism. But this does not mean that we can utterly dismiss his line of thought. The fact is that in the American interwar debates about international law and the prospects of peace there is a controversy between universalists and traditionalists in which arguments are deployed that strongly resemble Schmitt's.¹² Here, too, it emerged with a kind of internal cogency that on the universalist side the attempt to outlaw the use of force led to new justifications for the use of force in order to uphold the prohibition of force. This dilemma and the tiny step from universal moral responsibility to a political crusading mentality are highly characteristic for the history of American thinking about peace and also for American foreign policy. Paradoxical as the concept of *free-trade imperialism* may sound at first, there is a similar paradox in the way President Wilson's policy and its intellectual background was referred to as an *imperialism of good intentions*. It follows that we should think of the darker side of the republican conception of peace as consisting of the danger of allowing one's own side unlimited scope for the definition of situations within mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and of casually authorizing the use of force to intervene in order to bring about liberal regimes.

IV

It would appear, then, that power-political realism is by no means as realistic as it pretends to be, but rather uses a highly problematic model of rational action for the analysis of international relations. Similarly, liberal peace concepts may be better at disclosing the realities of normatively oriented actions but cannot be pursued in an unmodified way. If this is the case, then it follows that we need to develop an integrated concept of peace. Such a concept would contain the rule of law, a reliable set of expectations, economic equity and empathy (Dieter Senghaas), and would go beyond a simple confrontation between liberal idealism and power-political realism.¹³ However, such an integrated peace concept gains in realism even further if it is based on a sufficient understanding of violent phenomena. What that calls for is to avoid being misled by over-hasty moral reactions into overlooking the kernel of truth contained even in the mythologies of violence, although every step of that kind is bound to encounter emotional resistance. Thus, for example, when great German sociologists, such as Georg Simmel and Max Scheler, interpret the First World War as an opportunity to break with the tragic tendencies of modern culture and as the shattering experience of an ecstatic security that frees our

personalities from all inhibitions and makes us malleable again, then we may be tempted to respond with a description of the war experience of the ordinary soldier, his blood, sweat and tears. When a voice like that of Georges Sorel makes itself heard from amidst the workers' movement, saying that strikes and the violence associated with them are legitimate not because they are a means to social reform, but because they enable the oppressed to experience the process of becoming conscious of themselves, then we may be tempted to talk of an alien fascistoid intruder in the history of socialism. When, in a similar vein, Frantz Fanon argues that the violence of the colonized against the colonizers was necessary to overcome their feelings of inferiority and to regain their own identity, we are tempted to point to the blind alleys of violent decolonialization processes and the consequences of the concentration of military power, for example in Fanon's homeland of Algeria. When in the USA, as the model democracy, violence on the frontier of uncivilized nature and of the 'savage' Indians was the constant accompaniment of the establishment and stabilization of democratic polities, then we are tempted to react by saying that this is no more than a chance contingency that tells us nothing about the nature of the liberal social order.¹⁴ But we might also react quite differently. Perhaps we shall only understand the causes and effects of the First World War if we make the effort to think about it from the standpoint of the enthusiastic war mentality of intellectuals and the mass ecstasy of summer 1914. Perhaps social movements can often only be understood as collective attempts to acquire an identity that do not shrink from violence, rather than as activities in the furtherance of particular interests. Perhaps the curse of establishing a democratic polity by force continues to have an impact through the way in which the myth of regeneration through violence continues to reverberate through the history of that particular polity.

If these suggestions are convincing, this means that the liberal tradition of thinking about peace can only successfully be continued if we overcome our inhibitions about confronting the internal logic of violent phenomena. The effectiveness of these inhibitions can be seen not just in the repression of violence and in the tendency to describe violent phenomena that visibly fail to conform to the patterns of means–ends rationality as 'meaningless', as a regression to an earlier stage of civilization or as unleashing the 'savage' or the 'beast' in us that lurks behind the mask of civilization. It can also be seen in the tradition of research into violence when acts of violence are subsumed into the models of instrumental or normatively oriented action.¹⁵ Needless to say, there is no intention here to deny that it is possible to act violently from rational calculation or even from a sense of moral duty. But even

where this is the case, the practice of violence is fuelled by experiences and fantasies not contained in the ideas of 'ends' or 'norms', and this is even clearer where ends and morality did not in fact unleash violent action. As a theoretical task for research on violence, we should therefore formulate the question as follows: how are we to overcome an instrumental understanding of violence without contributing to a broadening of the concept to the point where all human relations appear to be permeated by violence and all social order posited by it? Nietzsche, the 'philosopher with the hammer', proclaimed in violent tones that the smashing of the ancient tablets of the law and the destruction of ancient shrines must be the premise of all new creation. In contrast, we must insist on both the affinity and the ultimate disjunction between creativity and violence.