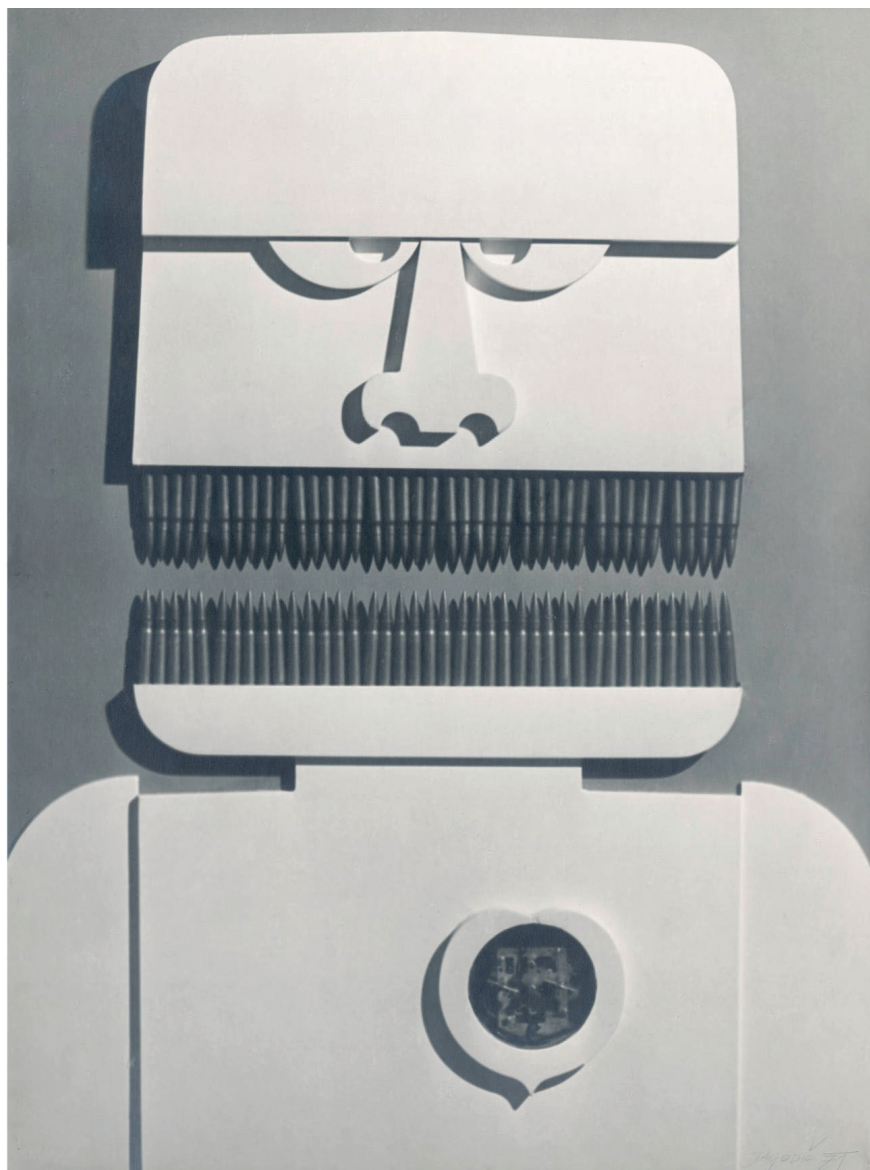


Peace Policies and Practices in Yugoslavia and Beyond



# PEACE, UNCONDITIONAL!

Edited by  
Sanja Petrović Todosijević and Martin Pogačar

PEACE

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PEACE,  
UNCONDITIONAL!



Institute for Recent History of Serbia  
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Belgrade, Ljubljana  
2025

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Sanja Petrović Todosijević\*\*

## Peace. Unconditional.

### The Vestiges of Peace and the Socio-Political Frameworks of War

#### Peace out of sight

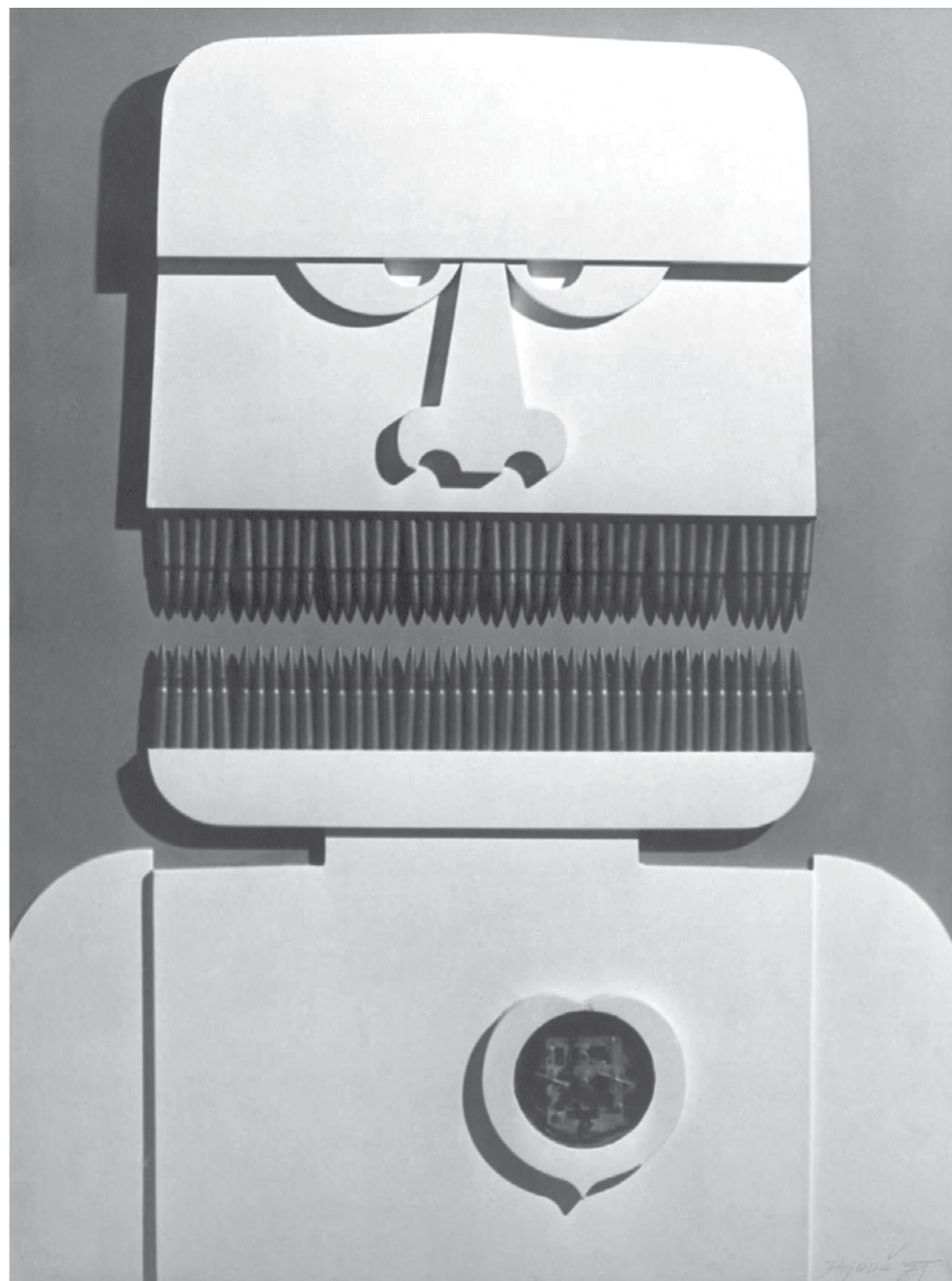
In early 2023, one of the editors, Martin Pogačar, attended a project meeting during which a heated debate took place over Russia's invasion of Ukraine. From the many interventions and comments, a prevailing critical stance toward Russia's aggressive policy in Ukraine was evident – primarily in the name of defending “European values”. Two things were particularly striking: the inability of the most vocal participants to recognize the selective application of those very “European values” by the international community, especially European institutions, in other situations in the past, and the complete absence of any discourse on the peaceful resolution of the conflict. Paradoxically, the responsibility of the international community – which not only failed to prevent war, but actively contributed to its escalation by sowing fear and hatred – was not mentioned at all.

The idea – initially for an academic conference – emerged under the strong impression left by the aforementioned meeting. A question naturally arose: In a world dominated by declarations of values that are rarely enacted in practice, would it be appropriate to organise a discussion on the conditions for practising and rethinking peace in the 21st century?

The call for papers issued by the organisers based at the Institute of Culture and Memory Studies, ZRC SAZU, for the conference titled *Peace, Unconditional. Politics. Histories. Memories. Futures*, held on 22–23 November 2023 in Ljubljana, stated:

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Stane Jagodič, *Militarist*, assemblage, 1971

The authors of the papers presented at the *Peace. Unconditional* conference thematise the issues of peace in a historical perspective, through different approaches and optics, in different time periods, but with a predominant focus on Eastern Europe, to thus contribute to debates and reflections on the conditions of peace in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>1</sup>

Seven days later, thanks to the collaborative efforts developed through the organisation of the panel titled *Socialism or Barbarism XI: Reclaiming Socialist Childhood*,<sup>2</sup> held as part of the 55th Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEES) in Downtown Philadelphia, the editors of this publication agreed to expand the book concept. In addition to the topics already addressed at the Ljubljana conference, which featured mostly philosophical and artistic and curatorial considerations of the role of peace, the volume would include additional chapters focusing on the analysis of the idea – or rather ideas – of peace, peace-building practices, the processes of constructing images of peace and the concrete actors behind peace policies, primarily within the context of the Yugoslav state.

Bringing together disciplinarily diverse chapters, our shared objective was to transcend not only disciplinary boundaries but also political borders and borders of entities established in 1918, at the very end of the First World War. At the same time, we wanted to draw attention to the plasticity of chronological boundaries to highlight the relativity and complexity involved in constructing peace policies across the four segments that guided our interest: ideas, practices, representations and peacemakers.

Fully aware that any discussion of peace is inevitably difficult – and often feels futile – and especially so in times of war, we begin with the unsettling words of Immanuel Kant, with the hope that peace will not render us as unprepared as “many” wars already have.

Whence it follows that a war of extermination, where the process of annihilation would strike both parties at once and all right as well, would bring about perpetual peace only in the great graveyard of the human race. Such a war then, and therefore also the use of all means which lead to it, must be absolutely forbidden.<sup>3</sup>

## Unconditional?

Peace is always conditional. The demand for the unconditional nature of peace should be understood as a key element in creating a world worth living in. This book-story is a contribution to the “quest” for such a world. For that reason, right at the very beginning of this book-world, the entire concept of “unconditionality” had to be called into question. Tomaž Mastnak, asking “Unconditional?” brings us closer to the nature of war, which determines the nature of peace, reminding us that a “holy war” does not always lead to a “holy peace”. On the contrary, it often ends in hell itself. History, as Tomaž Mastnak explains, is rich with reflections on peace dating back at least to biblical times to Rome and on to Leibniz and Kant (see above), the latter of whom referred to Abbé de Saint-Pierre’s idea of *pax perpetua* – eternal peace – based on the fact that the dead no longer wage war, even though peace is often marked by the plundering and killing of the living.<sup>4</sup>

In a review of an imaginary book by an imaginary author, *Genocide* by Horst Aspernicus, the Polish author Stanisław Lem explains that modernity brought about a change in the nature of warfare. In the past, the reasons for killing were mostly pragmatic (if also a modality of the infamous “because we can”), so:

the victor protected himself from future revenge. Such massacres were entirely public and even boastful in ancient cultures, as baskets filled with severed limbs and genitals were part of the victors’ triumphal parades, displayed as exhibits of success. In ancient times no one questioned this right of the victors. The defeated were either killed or enslaved, depending on the calculation of material gain.<sup>5</sup>

However, as Elana Gomel notes in her analysis of Lem’s *Provocation*, a significant change occurred in the modern era:

It is only in modernity that genocide becomes separate from warfare and branded as a crime. And only in modernity, genocide truly comes into its own as a motiveless, purposeless extermination of an entire group of people, in which, whatever its ostensible justification, the killing is an end in itself. It is not done for material gain. It fulfils no military need. The only purpose of mass murder is mass murder.<sup>6</sup>

1 Peace Unconditional. Politics, Histories, Memories. Futures, Conference programme available at: <https://ikss.zrc-sazu.si/en/dogodki/peace-unconditional-politics-histories-memories-futures>; video recording of the lectures available at: ZRC SAZU’s YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/5oCir9d4MSw?si=BnLJ6fTAAvpNcncZ>.

2 The panel participants were: Sanja Petrović Todosijević, Barbara Turk Niskač, Katja Kobolt, Martin Pogačar and Antje Postema.

3 Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace. A Philosophical Essay*, transl. M. Campbell Smith (London: George Allen, 1917 [1795]), 115.

4 Tomaž Mastnak, “Unconditional Peace? The Idea of Peace in Political Context,” in *Peace, Unconditional! Peace Policies and Practices in Yugoslavia and Beyond* ed. Sanja Petrović Todosijević, Martin Pogačar (Belgrade, Ljubljana: Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Založba ZRC, 2025), 29–43.

5 Stanisław Lem, *Provokacija*, Pamflet 11 (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2025).

6 Elana Gomel, “Stanisław Lem ‘Provocation’: the Ethics of Genocide,” *Medium*, [https://medium.com/@maya1233/stanislaw-lem-provocation-the-ethics-of-genocide-e277b62d948a#\\_edn4](https://medium.com/@maya1233/stanislaw-lem-provocation-the-ethics-of-genocide-e277b62d948a#_edn4), accessed 15 May 2025.

Building on the development of the idea of modern warfare, or rather the evolution of various strategies for achieving peace, further contributions were made in the chapters by Peter Klepec, Petra Svoljšak, Nemanja Stanimirović and Gal Kirn. Klepec introduces a new dimension: war becomes one of the conditions for achieving peace. He explains how war, once condemned, “transforms” into something perceived as “inevitable”, so much so that in the years following the end of the Second World War, this very “inevitability” became a prerequisite for the construction of an international order that, at least declaratively, prioritises peace and human rights. Over time, however, the rhetoric of “inevitability” – or rather of “brutal war” – has been employed selectively. Klepec’s text critiques the ideological framework that obscures the cruelty of warfare and highlights the tolerance of violence as a social mechanism for denying the catastrophic consequences of modern wars.<sup>7</sup>

This notion of denial as a social practice leads us to Petra Svoljšak’s chapter, which explores the historical contrast of the First World War, framed by the “ideals of ending all wars” articulated by numerous political and social actors at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, and the brutal reality of the war itself.<sup>8</sup> Faith in the ideals of the post-war world – where the First and Second World Wars are considered stages in the genesis of the same war efforts and peace endeavours – brings us to Nemanja Stanimirović’s text. Among other topics, he focuses on the activities of two “renegades” of the communist regime in Yugoslavia, Ivan Supek and Mihailo Marković, within international peace organisations during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>9</sup> His inquiry into ideals through the perspectives of Yugoslav dissidents leads us further to Gal Kirn’s chapter. Kirn examines two works – Šejla Kamerić’s *Cease* (2023) and Nika Autor’s *Sunny Railways* (2023) – both reflections on peace influenced by the consequences of the “longest peace” and the “brutal war” of the 1990s in the former Yugoslav territories, and warns of the tragic legacy of denial as a social practice, exemplified by the “chronic” absence of discussions on peace.<sup>10</sup>

7 Peter Klepec, “On the Cruelty of War,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 45–61.

8 Petra Svoljšak, “The War to End All Wars: A Broken Promise of Peace,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 63–79.

9 Nemanja Stanimirović, “Yugoslav Dissidents as Agents of Peace in the Era of Détente,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 81–105.

10 Gal Kirn, “Balkan Route to and from War: Reflections on Peace in Šejla Kamerić’s *Cease* (2023) and Nika Autor’s *Sunny Railways* (2023),” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 107–125.

## Peace on Earth

Philomena Cunk, the protagonist of the eponymous British TV series, rightly and ironically makes fun of the seriality of world wars: The First World War was the first played to modern standards, using modern killing technology and amassing an unfathomable number of victims, whereas the second already established a franchise ... Lethal capacities of weapons of mass destruction (bombs, automated and chemical weapons) in the First World War were also noted by Marko Ristić, a well-known Serbian and Yugoslav surrealist:

Over ten million dead, over twenty million wounded. Three and a half million displaced, ten thousand billion francs: this is, in the statistics’ lapidary and icy language, the balance sheet of the ruthless criminality into which twenty-two years ago humanity was thrown. As informative as it may be, such language is far too abstract to express the horrible concreteness of war; it is too dead to convey the living hell of organised death. But it will never be possible to speak concretely enough about the senselessness of war. It is up to those who know how to translate the data of life into concrete imaginings; it is up to artists and authors to contribute to keeping the real image of war alive as a constantly renewed caution for people.<sup>11</sup>

Starting from the numerous questions raised by Marko Ristić’s brief text, we thought examples of various practices employed by the Yugoslav state – particularly in the aftermath of the Second World War through the late 1950s and early 1960s when the country turned towards a policy of non-alignment – would serve as illustrative cases of the construction of Yugoslav foreign policy in the post-war years, as well as of the global frameworks within which Yugoslavia was “established”.

For this reason, Yugoslavia is a “deliberate” case study in this book, to which we sought to apply a “forensic” approach, using terminology familiar from popular crime television formats. We were encouraged in this endeavour by the concept of the exhibition/work installation at the Deutsches Historisches Museum entitled *Roads Not Taken. Or: Things Could Have Turned Out Differently*. Focusing on key years in German – and indeed global – history, the exhibition tells its story in reverse, against the flow of time:

The course of these caesurae begins in 1989 with the Peaceful Revolution in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and ends in the year 1848, when Germany first tried to attempt a democratic awakening. The exhibition takes up retrospectively

11 Marko Ristić, “Intelektualci pred problemom rata (1936),” *Ljudi u nevremenu* (Zagreb: Kultura, 1956), 79.

such topics as “Ostpolitik”, the building of the Wall, the Cold War, the assumption of power by the National Socialists, as well as revolution and democratisation at decisive points – and illustrates that history by no means had to end as it actually happened. In this way, milestones such as the Stalin Note of 1952, the Korean War in combination with the Berlin Airlift of 1948/49, the failed blasting of the bridge at Remagen in 1945, the attempted assassination of Adolf Hitler in 1944, the deposal of Chancellor Brüning in 1932, the revolution of 1918, the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, or the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, appear in a new light.<sup>12</sup>

Although perhaps not bold enough to approach the history of Yugoslavia “in reverse”, from the perspective of the first comprehensive plan to end the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992/1993 – better known as the Vance-Owen Plan, to which Vladimir Petrović dedicates his chapter in the book,<sup>13</sup> to the end of the First World War and the formation of the first Yugoslav political entity, we nevertheless recommend readers explore each of the four sections in the reverse order.

Contrary to the chronological flow, the efforts of various political actors advocating for Yugoslav peace policies can be traced from Yugoslavia’s participation at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975 in Helsinki, explained in Petar Dragišić’s chapter,<sup>14</sup> tracing Yugoslavia’s role in the anti-war movement of the 1960s and 1970s in relation to the activities of the European left, as presented in Luka Filipović’s contribution.<sup>15</sup> Opposing the flow of time and as a distinct section, the chapters by Jovan Čavoški,<sup>16</sup> Natalija Dimić Lompar<sup>17</sup> and Luka Savčić<sup>18</sup> attempt to explain the essential reasons behind socialist Yugoslavia’s engagement during the 1950s with international institutions and agencies operating under the auspices of the United Nations by analysing Yugoslavia’s approach to the Asian-African group of countries, its activities in the Forum for Peace and its stance on the colonial question. This engagement was a prerequisite for the shaping of Yugoslavia’s non-aligned policy and for establishing the Yugoslav state as one that contributed to peacebuilding worldwide by supporting “small” nations and liberation movements.

12 “Roads not Taken. Or: Things Could have Turned out Differently,” exhibition at the German Historical Museum, Berlin, 9 December 2022–11 January 2026. <https://www.dhm.de/en/exhibitions/roads-not-taken-oder-es-haette-auch-anders-kommen-koennen/>.

13 Vladimir Petrović, “Anatomy of a Lost Chance: Vance-Owen Peace Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina in Geneva, January 1993,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 513–545.

14 Petar Dragišić, “Yugoslavia and the Helsinki Summit in 1975,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 311–321.

15 Luka Filipović, “From Czechoslovakia to Chile, in the Shadow of Vietnam: Anti-War Movements and the European Communists, 1968–1974,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 289–309.

16 Jovan Čavoški, “Yugoslavia, Formation of the Asian-African Group and Issues of Peace in the United Nations (1950–1953),” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 265–287.

17 Natalija Dimić Lompar, “Entering the Cold War ‘Struggle for Peace’: Yugoslavia and the International Forum for Peace, 1951–1954,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 233–263.

18 Luka Savčić, “‘Struggle for Peace’ as a Form of Yugoslav Internationalism: A Case Study of Anti-colonialism” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 215–231.

Moving backwards leads us to the Second World War, examined in the chapters by Zoran Janjetović<sup>19</sup> and Rastko Lompar,<sup>20</sup> who address questions of the “use” and understanding of peace through analysis of policies concerning compensation for Nazi victims in Yugoslavia, as well as the views of interwar Yugoslav right-wing intellectuals, politicians and organisations on militarism and pacifism. Finally, we face a dilemma that defined the entire European intellectual and political scene, as well as societies at large, at the very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Is it acceptable to be a pacifist amid utter hypocrisy within European societies? Although by 1914 – as we learn from the work of Petra Svoljšak – 190 peace societies operated in Europe alone, publishing 23 journals in 10 languages, the First World War destroyed the foundations of the faltering “19<sup>th</sup>-century civilisation” within the next four years.

Romain Rolland wrote in 1915 an article entitled “Our Neighbour the Enemy”:

I know that each of their efforts – like mine – that each of their words of love, rouses and turns against them the hostility of the two hostile camps. The combatants, pitted against each other, agree in hating those who refuse to hate. Europe is like a besieged town. Fever is raging. Whoever will not rave like the rest is suspected. And in these hurried times when justice cannot wait to study evidence, every suspect is a traitor. Whoever insists, in the midst of war, on defending peace among men knows that he risks his own peace, his reputation, his friends, for his belief. But of what value is a belief for which no risks are run?<sup>21</sup>

In the first – or, in this reverse walk through political practices, rather the final – chapter, we arrive to the contribution of Srđan Mičić, who offers a detailed analysis of various aspects of the diplomatic service of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under the auspices of the League of Nations and the values that emerged from the ruins of the “old world” but also on the margins of a new mode of warfare whose lethal capacities would be fully realised several decades later.<sup>22</sup>

19 Zoran Janjetović, “Indemnification for Nazi Victims: The Federal Republic of Germany and Yugoslavia,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 191–213.

20 Rastko Lompar, “War and Peace within Interwar Yugoslav Radical Right Circles,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 165–189.

21 Romain Rolland, “Our Neighbour the Enemy, 15 March 1915,” in *Above the Battle*, transl. C. K. Ogden (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company: 1916), available via Project Gutenberg, <https://www.mirror-service.org/sites/ftp.ibiblio.org/pub/docs/books/gutenberg/3/2/7/7/32779/32779-h/32779-h.htm>.

22 Srđan Mičić, “Yugoslavia’s Pacifist Foreign Policy and Actions in the League of Nations, 1920–1933,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 129–163.

Thanks primarily to the United Nations, post-Second World War international relations were meant to rest on the affirmation of two key ideas: anti-fascism and coexistence among peoples who had, until recently, been at war. Advocacy for the idea of life in a state of “perpetual peace” – an idea closely tied to the notions of freedom and respect for human rights – was to be inextricably linked to the tragic legacy of the Second World War, a conflict that left tens of millions of soldiers and civilians dead, including approximately six million people murdered in the Holocaust. The collective momentum that emerged from the ruins of cities razed in bombing campaigns and from places marked by terror and atrocity sought to counter images of horror that had flooded the public imagination, with the constant repetition of one guiding maxim: Never again!<sup>23</sup> In the pursuit of freedom, ambitions extended even further. The post-war era – often framed in terms of the bipolar divide between East and West, socialism and capitalism – was also marked by the affirmation of numerous anti-imperialist and anti-colonial movements across the Global South. Thanks to the anti-imperialist struggles of Asian and African peoples and their liberation movements, centuries of colonial rule came to an end. The fight for freedom and independence was crucial in reshaping international and economic relations, establishing new cultural policies, advancing media and unleashing a veritable “explosion” of peace politics and studies.

The entire structure of the post-war world was mobilised in the service of building “perpetual peace”, which, as we have attempted to demonstrate in this book, was intended to permeate every aspect of public policy. Representations of peace became a significant component of artistic and literary interpretations of war, as reflected in the chapters by Zdenka Badovinac, Katja Kobolt, Stanislava Barać and Ovidiu Țichindeleanu.

Universal symbols of peace flooded school buildings and classrooms, effectively rivalling (or indeed complementing) portraits of national leaders and emblems of national struggle. By the 1960s, peace had become both a commodity and a symbol of consumer culture in Europe, the United States and beyond. The idea of “perpetual peace” (invariantly interpreted in relation to war, its constituent dark side) was introduced into public discourse through children’s literature and magazines, as well as through traditional peace symbols such as Picasso’s *Dove of Peace* (1949) and Gerald Holtom’s peace sign – ☮ – from 1958. In the restless era of the Cold War – marked

above all by American and Soviet interventions – the idea gradually transformed, as Zdenka Badovinac observes, into “instruments of various ideologies” and “souvenirs and items of mass consumption”.<sup>24</sup> In today’s world, Picasso’s “fallen” *Dove of Peace* has been consigned to oblivion and the margins of humanity’s conscience, together with Kristina Brenk’s *Ko si bil majhen* (When You Were Little, 1964),<sup>25</sup> Desanka Maksimović’s novel *Ne zaboraviti* (Lest We Forget, 1969)<sup>26</sup> or the iconography of socialist Yugoslavia and/or Romania, in which, as Țichindeleanu notes, “peace reigned above all other symbols”.<sup>27</sup>

Following the collapse of socialism, the “victorious” liberal capitalism systematically dismantled all political and ideological alternatives, striving to consign the socialist legacy to oblivion – including its peacemakers, written about by Nika Grabar,<sup>28</sup> Tina Filipović and Ana Kladnik,<sup>29</sup> Svetlana Stefanović,<sup>30</sup> Sanja Petrović Todosijević<sup>31</sup> and Nataša Kostić.<sup>32</sup> From today’s perspective, this might well be the most “resonant” part of the book, reminding us of the role that emancipation and education played in the construction of peace-oriented policies, as well as in shaping individuals who “grew” through life and work within their communities. In this context, collectivity is recognised through efforts directed towards emancipation: of space (the Pioneer Railways in Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade), of social groups such as women and children (the Yugoslav Committee for the International Women’s Year, the Pioneer Association of Yugoslavia, the Association of Organisations for the Education and Care of the Children of Yugoslavia), of memory politics (the Federation of Veterans’ Associations of the People’s Liberation War) and educational policies (teachers’ associations).

23 On the role and fate of the “never again” maxim in the early 21st century, see Martin Pogačar, “Forget Never Again. It’s Always Already War,” in *Towards a Collective Study in Times of Emergency*, eds. Charles Esche, Ezgi Yurteri, Lama El Khatib, Martin Pogačar, Nick Aikens, Ovidiu Țichindeleanu, Sara Buraya Boned, <https://internationaleonline.org/publications/collective-study-in-times-of-emergency/>, 169–182.

24 Zdenka Badovinac, “Peace as a Space for the Third,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 325–337.

25 Katja Kobolt, “Pictures of War, Pictures for Peace: Memory of the People’s Liberation Struggle in Yugoslav Children’s Literature,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 339–355.

26 Stanislava Barać, “‘Lest We Forget’: Desanka Maksimović’s Remembrance Politics and Anti-War Engagement,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 357–387.

27 Ovidiu Țichindeleanu, “On Seeing the Socialist Culture of Peace,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 389–411.

28 Nika Grabar, “Building Non-Peace,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 415–437.

29 Tina Filipović, Ana Kladnik, “Non-State Actors as Active Agents of Peace in Cold War Europe,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 439–459.

30 Svetlana Stefanović, “International Women’s Year (1975) and the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1976–1985) – The Yugoslav Answer,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 461–479.

31 Sanja Petrović Todosijević, “International Children’s Friendship Meeting (1976–1988). Social Organisation of Children in Socialist Yugoslavia and Education for Peace,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 481–511.

32 Nataša Kostić, “Teaching History and Learning about the Dissolution and Wars of the 1990s in Reconciliation Processes,” in *Peace, Unconditional!*, 547–567.

## Always only in retrospect

Today, humanity finds itself at the mercy of a handful of ambitious hegemonic powers and a ideological frameworks – one that proudly upholds its self-proclaimed role as the exclusive guardian of freedom and democracy. Unchecked, the West has assumed the position of arbiter of what is deemed right. Within such an unequal and hence biased configuration, any critique of neo-imperial and neocolonial hegemony is inevitably framed as an endorsement of authoritarianism or dictatorship. In this ideational and ideological “monoculture”, alternative social, political or economic initiatives are routinely delegitimised as lacking in freedom and democracy, leaving “no room for thought, no time to listen and hear and ponder; no need to reflect and debate, no use for empathy, solidarity or care”.<sup>33</sup>

Paul Ricoeur once observed:

Perhaps we should reserve the word ‘democracy’ to designate the degree of participation by citizens in power by means of organized discussion (rather than calling “democracy” the constitutional stage that [‘naturally’] follows the autocratic stage).<sup>34</sup>

The final part of the sentence is particularly salient: just as a new political order emerging from the ruins of authoritarianism is not necessarily democratic, so too does the self-proclamation of being democratic not automatically mean that one is not authoritarian. According to Darko Suvin, war is “more than a metaphor for bourgeois human relations; it is their allegorical essence”.<sup>35</sup>

Today, peace is rarely discussed. It is not taken seriously. At best, it is understood as an insignificant and marginal “by-product” of political and economic processes, or indeed an obstacle to these very processes. In a culture that normalises violence and warfare – against people, animals, plants and the entire planet – and in a culture of endless exploitation of resources, both organic and inorganic, of space and time, peace has become decentralised and delegitimised. Essentially, it is portrayed as an unnecessary condition for existence, an obstacle and hindrance to “freedom, democracy and progress”. For this reason, we invite you to pause and take time to look back into the past, to unsuccessful initiatives, potentially good solutions and failed implementations. Let us be humble before the suffering and destruction that have inadvertently shaped who we are today.

<sup>33</sup> Pogačar, “Forget Never Again,” 169–182.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Politics, Economy, and Society, Writings and Lectures*, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Polity, 2021), 6.

<sup>35</sup> Darko Suvin, *Gdje smo? Kuda idemo? Za političku epistemologiju spasa: eseji za orijentaciju i djelovanje u oskudnom vremenu* (Zagreb: Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, 2006), 121.

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June 2025

## A note to future readers:

When we started writing this introduction, we did not know whether the ongoing war in Ukraine and the destruction of Palestine would escalate into broader conflicts, or whether the international community would manage to bring them to an end. By the time we finished, in the shadow of Israel and the US’s attack on Iran, peace was nowhere in sight. Rather, it seems we are on the brink of yet another war to end all wars.

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