

Kant's *Perpetual Peace* (1795) and the Russia-Ukraine/NATO Conflict

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Abstract

The work that I wish to concentrate on here, *Perpetual Peace*, is situated at least in the converging fields of (international and constitutional) law and politics. Given its date of publication (1795), Kant's preceding works may all safely be said to have prepared his thinking for the progressive ideas expressed there, but to disclose the specific threads that connect each of these 12 preceding works with *Perpetual Peace* would require far more than a mere article. For this reason, I have confined myself largely to drawing such connections between the latter work and Kant's seminal (and famous) essay, *What is Enlightenment?* (1784) before elaborating on *Perpetual Peace* and its implications for the current global situation, which will, therefore, also have to be reconstructed, unavoidably, from my own perspective. This article, therefore, addresses the question of "lasting" world peace through the lens of Kant's essay on the conditions for "perpetual peace." This is done by listing each of the six "Preliminary Articles" and three "Definitive Articles" stated by Kant, in turn, and comparing their respective requirements to current events in the extant world, specifically those surrounding the Russia-Ukraine/NATO conflict. It is demonstrated that, although Kant admitted that the principles he listed comprised an "ideal", the present era marks a set of conditions further removed from lasting peace than ever before.

Keywords: Kant; *Perpetual Peace*; Russia; Ukraine; NATO; conflict

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Introduction: The Irony of History

This scheme of a federation of the nations of the world, in accordance with principles which would put an end to war between them, was one whose interest for Kant seemed to increase during the last twenty years of his life. It was according to him an idea of reason. ... Its realisation is the realisation of the highest good—the ethical and political *summum bonum*, for here the aims of morals and politics coincide: only in a perfect development of his faculties in culture and in morals can man at last find true happiness. History is working towards the consummation of this end. A moral obligation lies on man to strive to establish conditions which bring its realisation nearer. It is the duty of statesmen to form a federative union as it was formerly the duty of individuals to enter the state. The moral law points the way here as clearly as in the sphere of pure ethics: “Thou can’st, therefore thou ought’st.” (Smith 2016, 1511. Translator’s Introduction, *The Collected Works of Immanuel Kant 1491–1527*)

Anyone familiar with Immanuel Kant’s famous essay on *Perpetual Peace* (1795), and who is also critically aware of what is arguably an unprecedented global crisis, currently, is likely to reflect wryly on the ironies of history. After all, in this essay Kant pinned his hope for (the ideal of) everlasting peace among nations on the prospect of a federation of nations, and the formation of the United Nations in 1945 may perhaps be regarded as the realisation of this hope. The irony here is, in a nutshell, that the very *preconditions* that Kant set for perpetual peace have, in the contemporary world, become one of the chief forces undermining such peace, as I shall demonstrate below. This is a far-reaching statement, and a contestable one. Can it be justified?

Immanuel Kant is known, first and foremost, as the philosopher who gave humanity the three *Critiques*—that of *Pure Reason* (which addressed questions of the *a priori* grounds of cognition), of *Practical Reason* (which dealt with the question of a universally valid deontological approach to morality), and of *Judgement*, which functioned as a “bridge” between the first and second *Critiques* by focusing on the faculty of judgement—in relation to matters of taste—that is presupposed by both (Olivier 2022c, 21–22). While these already circumscribe a vast epistemic and disciplinary field, from epistemology, metaphysics, ontology, moral philosophy and aesthetics to natural philosophy, Kant’s interests were not confined to these, but extended further to include, among other disciplines, cosmology, (natural) history, natural science (physics), geography, law, religion and theology, anthropology, governmental studies (public administration), politics and education. The work that I wish to concentrate on here, *Perpetual Peace*, straddles at least (international and constitutional) law and politics, and arguably more than these fields. Given the date of publication of *Perpetual Peace* (1795), Kant’s preceding works—from *The Universal Natural History and Theory of Heaven* (1755) to and including *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason* (1795)—may all safely be said to have prepared his thinking for the progressive ideas expressed there; however, to disclose the specific threads that connect each of these 12 preceding works with *Perpetual Peace* would require far more than a mere article.

For this reason, I shall confine myself to noting, in passing, the resonance between the latter work and Kant's seminal (and famous) essay, *What is Enlightenment?* (1784) before elaborating on *Perpetual Peace* and its implications for the current global situation; part of which will, therefore, also have to be reconstructed, before outlining its pertinence for the current (fraught) global situation, unavoidably from my own perspective. In this noteworthy essay, Kant (*What is Enlightenment?* 2016a, 823) observes pointedly:

If we are asked, "Do we now live in an enlightened age?" the answer is, "No," but we do live in an age of enlightenment. As things now stand, much is lacking which prevents men from being, or easily becoming, capable of correctly using their own reason in religious matters with assurance and free from outside direction. But on the other hand, we have clear indications that the field has now been opened wherein men may freely deal with these things and that the obstacles to general enlightenment or the release from self-imposed tutelage are gradually being reduced. In this respect, this is the age of enlightenment, or the century of Frederick.

Judging by what Kant later wrote in *Perpetual Peace*, as will be argued below, at that stage, he believed that this "field" that had "been opened" also allowed him to touch on a topic that reflected the arguably enduring bellicose nature of humanity, in the hope that the (rational) "ideal" he outlined—specifically in the "Preliminary" and "Definitive Articles"—might, in times to come, serve to nudge humanity closer to universal and lasting peace. The translator of Kant's *Perpetual Peace* (Mary Campbell Smith) makes the following observation, confirming the "regulative" or "ideal" status of Kant's argument concerning lasting peace (Smith, in Kant 2016, 1511):

Let us be under no misapprehension as to Kant's attitude to the problem of perpetual peace. It is an ideal. He states plainly that he so regards it and that as such it is unattainable. But this is the essence of all ideals: they have not the less value in shaping the life and character of men and nations on that account. They are not ends to be realised but ideas according to which we must live, regulative principles. We cannot, says Kant, shape our life better than in acting as if such ideas of reason have objective validity and there be an immortal life in which man shall live according to the laws of reason, in peace with his neighbour and in freedom from the trammels of sense.

Hence we are concerned here, not with an end, but with the means by which we might best set about attaining it, if it were attainable.

Returning to the essay on enlightenment, it is interesting that, towards the end—clearly alluding to the "benevolent dictator" of Prussia, the monarch Frederick the Great—Kant writes with subtle ambiguity, which attains new meaning when read in the light of the later essay on lasting peace (Kant 2016a, 824):

But only one who is himself enlightened, is not afraid of shadows, and has a numerous and well-disciplined army to assure public peace, can say: "Argue as much as you will, and about what you will, only obey!" A republic could not dare say such a thing.

The sovereign—being enlightened to the point where the free public use of reason is encouraged, while cautioning against dissent—might rest assured, Kant contends, because the potential of a threat to the royal reign is a mere “shadow.” The radical implication of this remark should be clear. If the king does not submit himself to the same rational rules that govern the behaviour of citizens, the latter are not obliged to obey such a sovereign any longer. Revolt is, therefore, justified when authorities themselves do not act reasonably, but, by implication, unjustifiably. However—and here’s the rub—Kant is not averse to adding that this is the case only because the country is not a (constitutional) republic, where citizens have rights enshrined in a social contract, which means that their representatives in a governing body (such as a parliament) are accountable to them, instead of enjoying *carte blanche* as far as modes of governance are concerned. In the light of Kant’s contention in *Perpetual Peace*, that the promotion of such peace is facilitated by countries of the world having *republican* constitutions (discussed below)—where citizens have a say in questions pertaining to the possibility of entering into consequential relations of war with other countries—it is not difficult to discern implicit criticism of Frederick’s “absolute” rule in this remark: had Prussia been a republic, the king would have had to hold his tongue as far as demanding citizens’ obedience is concerned, let alone calling on the army to ensure such compliance.

One might also read *Perpetual Peace* in light of Hardt and Negri’s (2009) Deleuzo-Guattarian argument that a “minor voice” is detectable in Kant’s earlier enlightenment essay along with the “major voice” of the philosopher of the transcendental method. It was the latter who uncovered the conditions of possibility of certain knowledge of the sensible, law-governed phenomenal world, and alongside this (in the intelligible domain) of an ethical life according to the “categorical imperative” that makes possible duty-oriented social action and political responsibility. The problem with this “major voice” is that it leaves existing power relations, including those pertaining to the conditions for war and peace, as they are.

According to Hardt and Negri (2009), this “minor voice,” therefore, points towards an alternative to the modern conception of power complex that finds expression in Kant’s “major voice.” The “minor voice” of the revolutionary Kant is audible, for them, in this “minor” Kantian text, “What is enlightenment?” Significantly, they draw attention to Kant’s appropriation of the motto, taken from Horace, namely, “*Sapere aude!*” (“Dare to know!”) as expressing the meaning of “enlightenment.” They also cleverly highlight the very ambiguous manner in which this motto is developed by Kant in this brief text. On the one hand, there is clearly not much daring in Kant’s exhortation, that citizens do “their duty” obediently as citizens performing different tasks (civil servants, soldiers, ministers of religion) and paying their taxes to the sovereign, regardless of the dissatisfaction they may privately experience about these. Here, the two critical theorists *understand* Kant as corroborating the European rationalist tradition that construed the Enlightenment as a process in which the constant emendation of reason was carried out.

Such an approach, therefore, amounts to the reinforcement of the social and political *status quo*.

However, on the other hand, they contend that Kant's exhortation may be read (Hardt and Negri 2009, 17):

... against the grain: "dare to know" really means at the same time also "know how to dare." This simple inversion indicates the audacity and courage required, along with the risks involved, in thinking, speaking, and acting autonomously. This is the minor Kant, the bold, daring Kant, which is often hidden, subterranean, buried in his texts, but from time to time breaks out with a ferocious, volcanic, disruptive power. Here reason is no longer the foundation of duty that supports established social authority but rather a disobedient, rebellious force that breaks through the fixity of the present and discovers the new. Why, after all, should we dare to think and speak for ourselves if these capacities are only to be silenced immediately by a muzzle of obedience?

If Hardt and Negri (2009) are correct, what the "minor" Kant could teach one, concerns the need to distinguish between two kinds of thought and action. The "freedom of thought and expression" which may accompany it notwithstanding, the first sort would leave the established political, social and economic *status quo* intact, even if such an order is one of injustice. But, crucially, it would lack that other element foregrounded by Hardt and Negri's (2009) reading of Kant, namely "think (or know) how to dare!" This inversion would initiate the second kind of thought and action, which does not refrain from acting in such a manner that an unjust order is resisted and rejected uncompromisingly, such that one's autonomy is clearly manifested.

Does *Perpetual Peace* exhibit similar indications of encouraging readers to shift from "daring to think" to "thinking and knowing to dare"? Undoubtedly, such a "minor" way of thinking *and* acting would be accompanied by enormous risk, because it would challenge the established, dominant dispensation, where economic, political, and bureaucratic-administrative imperatives tend to keep citizens in a state of docility (today, one would say "compliance"). I daresay, the later text does display such signs, in so far as—judging by Kant's argument—the "Preliminary" as well as the "Definitive Articles" both exemplify "daring to think" differently, compared to customary approaches to the subject, *and* encouraging readers to "think to dare." After all, Kant was swimming against the stream with this essay, and anyone who took him seriously would have to take the *daring* step of promoting and advancing Kant's own, extraordinarily daring suggestion, that the world should actually work towards suspending the all-too-customary practice of waging war. As Kant's translator, Mary Campbell Smith, points out (in Kant 2016, 1510–1515), he was exceptional at the time in his promotion of the idea of "perpetual peace." His predecessor, Thomas Hobbes's anthropologically pessimistic, absolutist political philosophy, was compatible with, or even promoted war. Even his idealist successor, G.W.F. Hegel, was an ardent supporter of war, for the obvious reason that the historical dialectic he espoused was founded on a developmental pattern, which made room for what might broadly be called "progress

through struggle,” not unlike the social Darwinism that would be used to justify imperial wars in the later 19th century. Today, it would be much more difficult to offer a reasoned appeal to civilisational “progress” in order to justify war. Not that this functions preventatively as far as initiating wars is concerned—on the contrary.

Whatever the case may be—as I shall attempt to show below, in the course of considering the Preliminary and Definitive Articles one by one, and assessing the chances of their actualisation in the light of contemporary events surrounding the Russia-Ukraine/NATO conflict—ironically, we have probably never been further from the actualisation of Kant’s ideal of lasting peace than today, in 2024. As will be seen in what follows, through the interpretive lens I employ here, Russia emerges in a significantly more favourable light than Ukraine and its Western supporters. This would not surprise anyone who is cognisant of the fact that the mainstream media, which support Ukraine and the West, have all been compromised; to grasp what is really going on, one has to avail oneself of alternative media, as I have demonstrated on more than one occasion, with ample substantiation (Olivier 2021, 2022, 2022a, 2022b, 2023, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c). Anyone who employs a mainstream media perspective would unavoidably arrive at a different interpretation, however.

The “Preliminary Articles”

First, a look at Kant’s position is called for. He commences the essay (Kant 2016, 1529–1532) with so-called “Preliminary Articles,” which outline the measures that should be carried out first, to effect an immediate cessation of hostile actions, before the “Definitive Articles”—which would go further by laying the foundation for lasting peace—are stated. The *first* of the “Preliminary Articles” states: “No treaty of peace shall be regarded as valid, if made with the secret reservation of material for a future war.” Kant’s elaboration makes it clear that he is not naïve enough to conflate peace with “a mere truce, a mere suspension of hostilities”—perhaps to gain valuable time for one’s forces to recover or recoup their strength. The article is, therefore, intended to preclude any “mental reservation” of claims to be resurrected at a more auspicious future time.

Here, already, it is not difficult to discern in contemporary events a gross violation of Kant’s (perhaps unrealistic) expectations—although to be fair to him (and as mentioned earlier), he does refer to these as comprising an “ideal” (Kant 2016, 1540). For one thing, in the course of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine—which Russia invaded in 2022 because of what it perceived as threats to its national security by the prospect of Ukraine possibly joining NATO—it has become apparent that the so-called Minsk agreements of 2014 and 2015 were a sham, and merely served the purpose of “buying time” for Ukraine, allowing it to build up its military strength for a possible future clash with Russia. In this regard, Russia Today (RT 2022) reports as follows on the remarks by a Russian senator:

Senator Konstantin Kosachev was reacting to an admission by former French president Francois Hollande that the Minsk agreements were actually a ploy to buy time for the Kiev government to strengthen its military. This move should be credited for Ukraine's "successful resilience" to Russia in the ongoing conflict with its neighbor, he added.

Hollande was echoing a statement by former German chancellor Angela Merkel, who described the Minsk accords in December as "an attempt to give Ukraine time" to build up its armed forces.

It is not difficult to see in this revelation an unambiguous example of what Kant described as "... the secret reservation of material for a future war," which clearly invalidated the Minsk accords.

The *second* preliminary article maintains that: "No state having an independent existence—whether it be great or small—shall be acquired by another through inheritance, exchange, purchase or donation." Here, Kant draws an analogy between a state and a "moral person," arguing that "grafting" one state upon another is tantamount to destroying its existence as such a "moral person," and that it contradicts the original contract between a state and its people.

Again, one can turn to Russia and Ukraine, where the history of Crimea, and of the Donbas, furnishes an example of this preliminary article, but in an inverse manner. Crimea and the Donbas were both incorporated into Ukraine by the Soviet Union before the demise of the latter, but after the 2014 pro-Western Maidan *coup* in Ukraine, Crimea decided via a referendum to rejoin Russia (RT 2022a). The terrain of the "special military operation" by Russia in the Donbas area, too, may serve to illustrate something relevant to Kant's second Preliminary Article, but perhaps not as one might expect. Since 2014, Donetsk and Lugansk—formerly Ukrainian regions—have been *de facto* independent, while Kherson and Zaporozhye are areas formerly occupied by Ukraine (RT 2022b). The inhabitants of all four of these regions are predominantly Russian-speaking and have, since the Minsk accords of 2014, been shelled regularly by Ukrainian forces (RT 2023).

Hence, it appears that, while Ukraine could have claimed at least Kherson and Zaporozhye as part of its territory, it has not treated the people of this region (nor those of Donetsk and Lugansk) as valued Ukrainian citizens—on the contrary. Unsurprisingly, therefore, when citizens in these four regions were given the opportunity to decide, via a referendum (between September 23 and 27, 2022; RT 2022c), whether they wanted to be incorporated into the Russian Federation, they voted in favour of it, and were duly declared part of Russia. Hence, both the examples of Crimea and of the latter four territories are related to Kant's second preliminary principle in an inverse manner: instead of being acquired by Russia "through inheritance, exchange, purchase or donation," all of them joined Russia through the exercise of the will of their people—which is hardly surprising, given the fact that Crimea simply returned to the bosom of its former national home, and the other four

regions eventually also joined the country where they feel at home (culturally speaking), in contrast to Ukraine, which has been punishing them since 2014 (and still does so today through intermittent shelling).

Thirdly, “Standing armies shall in time be totally abolished.” Here, Kant elaborates on the incitement to war that the mere existence of constantly expanding armies, which seem to compete with those of other countries, appears to represent. Their constant readiness to fight adds to the unabated threat embodied in these armies; hence the requirement that such armies should be abolished if lasting peace were to be achieved. It is hardly necessary to point out that, if Kant had been alive today, he would probably have been horrified, not only at the continuing practice of countries arming themselves and maintaining armies, but particularly at the fact that several countries have large nuclear arsenals—something unknown in Kant’s time—which are capable of destroying the world as we know it. “Perpetual peace,” under such conditions? A very distant prospect, it would seem.

The *fourth* requirement is that “National debts shall not be contracted with a view to the external friction of states,” and with this Kant alludes to the use of a credit system for funding wars indefinitely, and not for the legitimate purpose of maintaining the economic administration of a country, such as improving its infrastructure. Kant writes of the “ease ... with which war may be waged” by means of such a credit system, which makes it imperative to remove such a purpose that credit may be used for, as it is an impediment as far as lasting peace is concerned. I have no doubt that such credit facilities do exist internationally, considering the frequency with which one notices reports about countries buying a variety of weapons from arms-producing countries such as America, the United Kingdom, Russia, Sweden, France, Germany and others. Although the continuing conflict in Ukraine does not, as far as I can tell, depend on a credit system as envisaged by Kant, the colossal amounts of money (and armaments) that have been, and are still being, supplied to Ukraine by (chiefly) the United States, and also by NATO countries (RT 2023a), beggars belief, and would certainly have been deprecated by the German philosopher.

In the *fifth* place, the philosopher of Königsberg states that “No state shall by force interfere with the constitution or government of another state”—a stipulation that is virtually self-evident, given the obvious manner in which this would encroach on the independence and autonomy of the state suffering such an intrusion. The only exception to this rule would pertain to countries that have descended into civil strife and chaos, where a neighbouring state could legitimately assist one of the opposing factions with the goal of helping it restore internal order.

As far as this goes, it is interesting to note that (according to *Democracy Now* 2018) the United States has interfered in government elections across the world; it is estimated that, between 1946 and 2000, this has occurred more than 80 times. Going back to the late 19th century, America assisted in the overthrow of what was then the Kingdom of

Hawaii, and invaded Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines. In the early 20th century, it was the turn of Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua, and later, after the Second World War, it helped depose the government of Guatemala, and those of Indonesia and the Congo. More recently, of course, the US did the same thing in Iraq (*Democracy Now* 2018).

Needless to point out, these instances of meddling fall squarely in the fifth category of “Preliminary Articles” listed by Kant, and are symptomatic of the fact that the United States must, therefore, probably be regarded as the country, *per excellence*, that has stood in the way of progress towards world peace, let alone lasting peace as understood by Kant.

The *sixth* requirement reads: “No state shall, during war, permit such acts of hostility which would make mutual confidence in the subsequent peace impossible: such are the employment of assassins (*percussores*), poisoners (*venefici*), breach of capitulation, and incitement to treason (*perduellio*) in the opposing state.” Kant calls these “dishonourable stratagems,” which go against the confidence, no matter how minimal, that one’s adversary is favourably disposed towards peace. As he rightly observes, without such an assumption, there could never be peace, and an internecine war (of “extermination”) would ensue. After all, it is only in the state of nature that the assertion of a certain “right” would be accompanied by force, in the absence of courts of justice by which civilisation is characterised. The “hostile acts” referred to in this requirement for peace would inevitably lead to a “war of extermination” and must, therefore, be forbidden.

What comes to mind immediately are the instances where Ukraine—and probably NATO, indirectly, if not directly—has carried out “acts of hostility” against Russia that would militate against the possibility of peace negotiations. There is the assassination of philosopher Aleksandr Dugin’s daughter, Darya, by means of a car bomb that was probably intended for Dugin himself, given his closeness to President Vladimir Putin of Russia (Sands 2022). Another recent assassination on Russian soil was that of Vladlen Tatarsky, a popular Russian military blogger, in an explosion at a St Petersburg café (Al Jazeera 2023). Given that both of the people killed in these attacks were civilians, Kant’s sixth article is clearly implicated—no state that desires peace to replace an ongoing conflict, would engage in such acts. Add to this that there are indications of the American president having called for the replacement of President Putin in Russia, even though attempts were made to put a different complexion on it later (Al Jazeera 2022), and there is no denying the blatant manner in which prospects of peace are undermined by Ukraine and its “allies,” the US and NATO.

The “Definitive Articles”

Unlike the “Preliminary Articles,” the three “Definitive Articles” identified by Kant (2016, 1533–1540) would provide a foundation on which to build lasting peace and not only a termination of hostilities. They are, *first*, “The civil constitution of all states shall

be republican,” which expresses Kant’s conviction that it is the “only constitution which has its origin in the idea of the original contract, upon which the lawful legislation of every nation must be based.” He opines further that such a constitution accords with the *liberty* of citizens as human beings, with the principle that the latter depend on *shared legislation*, and with that of their *equality* as citizens—stipulations in which one can detect echoes of the tripartite motto of the French Revolution, “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” (Élysée 2022). The reason why it is the only constitution that can pave the way to lasting peace, is that it requires the agreement of citizens before the “bad business” of war can be undertaken.

Although it is the case today that most countries in the world are “republican” in the sense of being representative instead of “direct” democracies, evidence suggests that the US Congress has circumvented the principle that, as representatives of the American people, it has to declare war against a perceived enemy before American taxpayer funds and military personnel may be utilised in a military conflict. As Napolitano (2023) points out:

Congress has not only not declared war on Russia; it has not authorized the use of American military forces against it. Yet it has given President Biden \$113 billion and authorized him to spend it on military equipment for Ukraine as he sees fit.

The *second* of the “Definitive Articles”—“The law of nations shall be founded on a federation of free states”—is essential for enduring peace in so far as such a federation, where states would be subject to federal laws, is comparable to a state with a republican constitution, which is governed according to laws that are external to the (often unruly) will(s) of citizens themselves. Unless such a federation of nations (as opposed to a “state” of nations, where all member states would comprise only one “nation”) were to be created, the rights of every member state would not be guaranteed, parallel to the way citizens’ rights are guaranteed in a republican state.

It appears that the United Nations, established after the Second World War in late 1945, may be regarded as such a “federation of free states.” Nevertheless, when comparing current events in Ukraine (and in Israel/Gaza) with Kant’s expectations regarding its role in the promotion of peace, the following excerpt from the UN Preamble (United Nations Preamble, n.d.) rings somewhat hollow:

... to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours,
and

... to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

... to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest ...

Moreover, a perusal of the UN's "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (Official System Documents of the United Nations n.d.) impresses on one the ostensibly noble and praiseworthy international, global goals of this organisation, which pledges, among other things, that (no. 8):

We envisage a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination; of respect for race, ethnicity and cultural diversity; and of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity. A world which invests in its children and in which every child grows up free from violence and exploitation. A world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed. A just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met.

And yet, alternative news and commentary sources reveal a disturbingly different side to the UN's Agenda 2030. According to an erstwhile UN executive director—interviewed by Dr Reiner Fuellmich in the documentary film (Stop World Control 2023)—who worked for the organisation for 20 years, instead of being laudable, the real aims of this much vaunted "agenda" are diametrically opposed to those explicitly stated. This former director intimates that the UN has been hijacked by a coterie of criminals (mainly at the World Economic Forum), which is already engaged in an attempt to take complete control of humanity via a series of steps, including the Covid-19 "pandemic" (Olivier 2023). It is superfluous to be reminded that such a state of affairs, if confirmed to be the case, would be anathema to world peace—on the contrary (Olivier 2023a).

"The rights of men, as citizens of the world, shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality" is the *third* of the "Definitive Articles" named by Kant. He stresses the difference between hospitality as a "right" and philanthropy, clarifying that the former implies that a stranger peacefully entering a foreign territory has the right not to be treated with hostility, but simultaneously cannot claim the right to be treated as a "guest" for a longer sojourn; this would only be made possible by an agreement ("compact") between visitors and their hosts. Kant's comment in this regard is justly famous (2016, 1538–1539):

This right to present themselves to society belongs to all mankind in virtue of our common right of possession on the surface of the earth on which, as it is a globe, we cannot be infinitely scattered, and must in the end reconcile ourselves to existence side by side: at the same time, originally no one individual had more right than another to live in any one particular spot.

Kant sees the adoption of this article as a prerequisite for territories that are far apart to establish friendly and peaceful relations, so that humanity may at last approach the actualisation of "a cosmopolitan constitution." Needless to say, "universal hospitality" does not obtain in the world of the 21st century, although it is arguably the case that those countries (such as South Korea) where visa-free entry conditions prevail, display

such hospitality internationally. Even here, however, pervasive technologically-mediated surveillance raises questions about the extent of the hospitality in question. As for those countries where stringent visa requirements meet the prospective visitor, one can hardly speak of hospitality, given the “conditions” that have to be met before entry is allowed (Olivier 2007).

Conclusion

In sum, weighing contemporary events related to the ongoing military conflict in Ukraine against Kant’s stated requirements for “perpetual” or lasting world peace, it is abundantly evident that the present seems to be further than ever from the possible actualisation of such peace on a global scale. Much will have to change for that to be contemplated, as the preceding reflections have shown.

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