

Immanuel Kant and His Concept of Perpetual Peace: A Politico-Moral Philosophical Analysis

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Abstract

Peace and war are integral to mankind's history, originating from human desire for power, prestige, and respect. Philosophers have explored the ways to create and maintain peace since ancient times. Immanuel Kant's 1795 peace treaties, "Perpetual Peace-A Philosophical Essay", significantly contributed to the concept of peaceful co-existence among nations. Kant's ideas on history include the rise of civil society, the development of larger political communities, peaceful intercourse, culture and morality, progress, and the future of mankind. The condemnation of war suggests perpetual peace.

Kant's Peace treatise provides an argument for a peaceful global order that presupposes cosmopolitan law, which can replace classical law among nations with one that states the rights of men as citizens of the world. The treatise includes two types of conditions, negative and positive, and two supplements and appendices. Overall, Kant's study of peace has a politico-moral flavor.

Despite Kant's perpetual peace lesson, we have not yet made any progress towards peace. Evil forces have taken hold of the human race, and it is crucial to fight against war and observe our duty to prevent it from being too late. War is a real reality with many consequences, including loss of belongings, families, and lives. The current world situation is difficult and dangerous. It is essential to attain world peace and make peace in conflict zones to resolve conflicts effectively. Conflict creates instability, fear, suffering, and economic difficulties, leading to thousands of deaths and injuries. Conflict and war are painful and complicated realities that have long-lasting effects on the countries where they occur and those who seek help. Therefore, it is crucial to pursue world peace and follow Kant's perpetual peace lesson to ensure the right path for us.

Keywords: Peace, war, perpetual, political, moral, human race

Immanuel Kant, a prominent philosopher from the late Enlightenment period, made significant contributions to Western philosophy, including epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and aesthetics.¹ His belief in reason as the basis of morality

shifted the debate between empiricism and rationalism, leading to the introduction of “Transcendentalism.”² Kant's concept of “Perpetual Peace” inspired the creation of the League of Nations.³

The everlasting and inescapable components of human history are the occurrences of peace and conflict. They are said to have their roots in the innate human need for respect, authority, and power. Philosophers from many historical periods who studied the conduct, nature, and effects of conflicts often illustrated the potential for establishing and maintaining peace. The concept of fostering interstate harmony has evolved since antiquity. Immanuel Kant made a significant contribution to the development of the idea of peaceful coexistence among countries with his peace treatise “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay” (1795).⁴ Kant discusses how to achieve this aim in this passage.

The goal of perpetual peace is located in Kant's philosophical framework in *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* (1784).⁵ Kant expands his understanding of history in this work, including topics such as the emergence of civil society from barbarism, the growth of bigger political communities and areas of peaceful intercultural interaction, the genesis of culture and morality, progress, and the destiny of humanity.⁶ The rejection of war is a step toward enduring peace. It is evident that Kant's analysis of peace has a political-moral bent.⁷

The Peace Treaty has two different kinds of such conditions: positive and negative. Preliminary and decisive articles are what Kant refers to them as.⁸ There are two appendices and two supplements at the conclusion of the book. The work as a whole makes the case for the hypothesis that cosmopolitan law is necessary for a peaceful international order. This legislation, which outlines men's rights as global citizens, can take the place of the traditional international law.⁹

The preliminary articles are included in the first portion of the Peace treaties. These six articles are available. They are founded on the idea that everything which stands in the way of peaceful international coexistence and should be destroyed.¹⁰

The six preliminary articles of the first section of Kant's peace treaties' may be stated as follows:

- (I) No treaty of peace shall be regarded as valid, if made with the secret reservation of material for a future war.¹¹

If not, a treaty will just be a ceasefire or a pause in hostilities rather than a true state of peace. All conflicts come to a stop when there is peace. When peace is reached, all potential reasons of conflict are eliminated.

- (II) No state having an independent existence - whether it be great or small - shall be acquired by another through inheritance, exchange, purchase or

donation.¹²

The state is not the space that it resides on. It's not something you own. However, it is a community of men over which no one else, save the state, has the authority to speak or act. A condition is comparable to a tree's trunk. Its origins are unique. Kant does not neglect to remind us in this regard that a hereditary kingdom is not a state that may be inherited by another state. However, another physical person may inherit the authority to rule it. In this way, the state gains a ruler. However, he does not become the ruler of the state.

- (III) standing army shall be abolished in course of time.¹³

According to Kant, a state's standing armies give the impression that they are always ready for battle, which poses a constant danger to other nations.

- (IV) No National debts shall be contracted in connection with the external affairs of the state.¹⁴

To borrow money in the interests of the national economy is a participle procedure.

- (V) No state shall violently interfere with the constitution and administration of another.¹⁵

Kant believed that while an outside state may help a nearby state, it could never meddle with another state's governance or constitution through coercion.

- (VI) No state at war with another shall countenance such modes of hostility as would make mutual confidence in a subsequent state of peace.¹⁶

According to Kant, these articles are meant for eradicating the immediate causes of war.¹⁷

Kant adds to those six preliminary articles three definitive articles in the second section of the aforesaid essay. According to him, they are meant for eradicating the remote causes of war. They also make clear the ground for the prospect of a lasting Peace.¹⁸ The definitive articles may be explained in the following way:

- (I) The civil constitution of each state shall be republican.

Kant believes that a Republican Constitution should be the basis for rightful legislation. He outlines three principles: freedom, dependence, and equality. The first principle treats society members as individuals, the second principle treats them as subjects, and the third principle treats all as citizens. Kant believes the Republican Constitution originated from the concept of right and offers the prospect of perpetual peace. However, in a republic where subjects are not citizens, the head of state can

decide on war, as they are not a member of the state but its proprietor. This principle highlights the importance of a Republican Constitution in ensuring the rightful legislation of people.¹⁹

(II) The law of nations shall be founded on a federation of free States.

Kant argues that nations should require others to have a constitution for their security, referred to as the league of nations.²⁰ This league is not a state of nations, as every state involves a superior to an inferior relationship. Kant believes that civilized people would leave a lawless state where the chief puts others in danger and sacrifices thousands of people. He believes that the concept of right has not been banished from politics, even in the face of malevolent human nature. Kant believes that the word “right” would never be spoken among states without morality among humans.²¹

States pursue rights through war, but Kant denies that right can be decided by war or its outcome, victory, or a peace pact. He believes that reason can establish rights, and that a condition of peace cannot be established without a pact of nations among themselves. To establish a condition of peace, there must be a direct duty, which can be achieved through a league of a special kind.²²

(III) The rights of men, as citizens of the world shall be limited to the conditions of universal hospitality.

Philanthropy is a right that involves the right of a foreigner to visit another's land without hostility. This right should be present to all humans, allowing for peaceful relations between distant parts of the world. Kant criticizes the inhospitable behavior of European commercial states and the injustice shown in visiting foreign lands and people. He criticizes the domination shown by Europeans in Hindustan, China, and Japan.²³ Kant believes that a cosmopolitan right is necessary, supplementing state and nation rights for the public rights of human beings and perpetual peace.²⁴ He criticizes European domination in Hindustan, China, and Japan.

The assurance of eternal peace is the subject of the first supplement. Kant invites us to examine Nature's mechanical process. He asserts that her air is intended to bring about harmony among people, even in the face of conflict and against their will. When seen as the driving force behind a cause whose workings are unknown to us, this design is known as fate. However, when viewed as the intentions that Nature has made evident, guiding itself toward the ultimate Practical aim of the human race and predetermining the path of events with an eye toward its accomplishment, it is termed Providence.²⁵ Regarding the aim of eternal peace, we recognize that it is our responsibility to employ Nature's mechanism to achieve that goal. We have a moral and ethical obligation to believe that the vision of permanent peace may be achieved.²⁶

Kant asserts in the second supplement that states that are prepared for war ought to take into account the maxims of philosophers on the circumstances under which public peace is attainable. The government will let the philosophers to openly and freely discuss the generals' precepts for establishing peace and conducting battle.²⁷

This reminds us of another essay of Kant, which also is "What is Enlightenment?". In this essay Kant draws a distinction between two types of the uses reason- the private reason and public uses reason. Kant suggests is that philosophers should be completely free in the public uses of reason, though the private use of their reason may be restricted.²⁸

Kant's practical philosophy has two main endeavours: politics and morals. Furthermore, the main issue within is the moral code. This framework is the foundation of politics. Therefore, there is a conflict between politics and morality about the goal of enduring peace. In the first appendix to his peace treaties, Kant addresses this debate.²⁹

In the second appendix of the peace treatise Kant is concerned with the harmony which the transcendental idea of public right establishes between morals and politics.³⁰

Kant's peace lesson and project are logically located within his theory, with perpetual peace proposed as a political ideal attributed to man's nature. Kant studied politics and morality in his peace study, ensuring that his logical geography is accurately determined.³¹

Kant acknowledges the reality of war and its potential in the future, even in the interest of peace. He believes that the ultimate goal of mankind should be unending peace, not war. He believes that war is not avoidable in any circumstances and that peace should be the ultimate goal.³²

The concept of *the kingdom of ends* and that of *summum bonum* are two important concepts of Kant's moral philosophy. Kant has used those concepts in his peace project; and he has done his work very significantly. Even what he calls the federation of free states is the political form of *the kingdom of ends*; and perpetual peace is the political *summum bonum*.³³

As we previously discussed, Kant's peace project was realized with the creation of the United Nations Organization (U.N.O.), although the organization has not faithfully carried out its mandate. The world is still not free of war because of this. The only path to humanity's survival in this circumstance is to apply Kant's lesson on peace.³⁴

But regrettably, we haven't even started down the path Kant outlined for achieving peace. The entire human race is under the control of evil forces. Thus, we ought to

internalize Kant's peace. It is now imperative that we fight against war and fulfil our obligations in any way possible before it is too late.³⁵

When we hear the word “war” we typically picture something far-flung and cinematic. Because we have never done one, we may even believe it to be enjoyable. However, people lost everything they knew, their families, their homes, and their lives in a real war with many, many aftereffects. Many people in conflict zones live in a reality that seems so distant to us on a daily basis.³⁶

For this reason, achieving global peace and bringing about peace in areas of conflict is crucial. Not only is there always a more peaceful way to settle disputes than starting hostilities. When there is conflict, the local population suffers greatly and there are many negative effects such as scarcity of food and water, financial hardships, and so on. It left thousands of people wounded and dead.³⁷

All things considered, war and conflict are realities that cause great suffering and complexity for those who experience them. They also have terrible, enduring effects on both the countries in which they occur and the people who wish to assist them. Thus, maintaining world peace is crucial. Kant's lesson on perpetual peace can help us choose the appropriate course in this circumstance.³⁸

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