

BOOK REVIEW “WISDOM AND SWORD” BY ILIJA KAJTEZ

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Ilija Kajtez

Wisdom and Sword

Volume II - Philosophers of the New Age on the Riddles of War and Peace



Wisdom and Sword, Volume II, Philosophers of the New Age on the Riddles of War and Peace, by Ilija Kajtez, LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, Germany, 2017, 409 pages

The reconstruction of political pluralism in the territory of former Yugoslavia in the last decade of 20th century has brought a myriad of significant changes not only in the political sphere, but in the cultural, as well. With the nerve of an insightful observer, Miloš Knežević has noticed at that moment that two categories of educated people dedicated to work in two important institutions – the church and the military have come back to the public. Both institutions have several significant common characteristics: conservatism, focus on supreme goals, tendency towards the monolithic and uniformity, distinctive feeling of belonging to the institution expressed by its

employees, reputation of their profession... However, it is certain that the aforementioned institutions differ to a great extent in their social roles, and surely (not the least) in the incentives rendered to their members to take an active part in the public. Those differences explain to a certain extent the unequal contribution to spiritual culture and the effect in the cultural sphere of these two institutions and persons related to them. It would be precious if some young talented researcher dealt with the contribution of the military personnel to the national culture since the introduction of a multi-party system in our country.

The Media Centre „Odbrana“ has vastly contributed to opening of the military thought to the national cultural sphere by its diverse activities, particularly publishing. This publisher released in 2012 a very unusual book “Wisdom and Sword: Philosophers on the Secrets of War and Peace” by Ilija Kajtez. This book is already unusual because in the period of McDonaldisation of everything, including science, the author has prepared it for years, patiently arranging a mosaic dedicated to complex phenomena of war and peace

composed of dominant philosophical and social ideas and theories from the oldest forms of war conflicts to globalization of war. The book is also unusual because of its volume of 748 pages, bibliography including 463 books and 2,004 footnotes, which stand firmly against light-mindedness of modern times. It is also unusual because it glorifies Mind and Spirit when practical reason and body govern in a sovereign manner (not only masses). This book has become by its comprehensiveness and thoroughness unavoidable literature for everyone who would like to seriously deal with philosophy and sociology of war and peace in total or in certain segments. Therefore, the destiny of this book was to come out of the national framework and become available to wider philosophically oriented reading audience, which confirms the author's competence and nice style, and publishing and business wisdom of the Media Centre "Odbrana", as well, which has recognized, as the publisher, the potential of the book itself and has published it, without shortening and cutting, which would mostly damage philosophical totality and truth about peace and war (which is, according to many, the same).

The publishing company LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing from Germany has become interested in the book „Wisdom and Sword“ by Ilija Kajtez. The author has prepared for the abovementioned company a special edition of the book in English in three volumes with certain updates and in cooperation with the talented translator Dragan Stanar. Two volumes have been published so far whereas the third one is to be published soon. The second volume was printed in 2017 and it deserves special attention because it encompasses the most important and the most vital ideas and theories of war and peace from the pen of a great number of significant philosophers and sociologists, from the Empiricism, Rationalism and Enlightenment to Sociological Organicism and Social Darwinism. It is particularly important that some of very controversial, yet unavoidable, theories of war have been dealt with in this volume.

The pages devoted to Carl von Clausewitz, the most significant European war philosopher (in a general's uniform) are precious because they bring up-to-date interpretation of one of the most influential, and the most controversial theories of war in the last 30 years. Theorists of new wars do not miss to make a departure from the concept of war by Clausewitz, but the resistance which this theory renders does not stop to fascinate scientists dedicated to research of war. Kajtez represents Clausewitz (and his theory, of course) in the manner, which was made famous by the historian in antiquity, who sought the historical judgement to be deprived of hatred and bias. He does not accept admirable, shocking theses, which would be quoted only because they are extravagant. He tries to ascertain and fathom what is really permanent and current in the universe of Clausewitz, what still makes him one of the great world teachers.

The next controversial giant of the social thought, including the one on war is Karl Marx, whose social thought has been in the focus of interest of social sciences, and also social reality, political, even economic practice for more than a century and a half. Once celebrated as a messiah of the new age, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the theory by Marx was often in Post-communism in the position of a culprit sentenced to public humiliation and the world had to be affected by great economic crisis, so that in Post-communism, under the influence of the same striving in the West, the theory by Marx is again regarded as a still possible source of inspiration. Kajtez rightfully emphasises the importance of the classical works of Marxism for comprehension of war as a so-

cial-historical phenomenon, and raising hope in the development of human potential of a man and ending the history of war in harmonic international cooperation of nations in meaningful international peace.

The last, eighth chapter of the second part of the English edition of „Wisdom and Sword“ is dedicated to sociologists, who have developed and expressed their considerations of society and social phenomena under the influence of biology, particularly Darwin's theory of evolution. To what extent this topic is still current can be best seen exactly in Serbia, where a petition for revision of studying the theory of evolution in schools and at faculties has been in the focus of interest not only of expert, but the widest audience. Kajtez realises that biologism in sociology has a significant achievement, which cannot be disputed and should not be missed – man is a natural being, inseparable from the nature, whose laws apply to them, as well. However, as the author realises, biologists stop where one should begin. They do not see specificity of social phenomena and they bring a man down to a layer, which cannot lead us to the truth about man, no matter how important that layer might be. As the author correctly notices, „man is a natural being, but a natural human being“ (p. 394). If we take man, like Đuro Šušnjić, as a being who searches for their rational and human possibilities, we can say that this book represents contribution to humanisation of man, a being whose the most profound layer is necessarily and irrevocably natural despite all technics, equipment and machines.

„Wisdom and Sword, Volume II, Philosophers of the New Age on the Riddles of War and Peace“ from the pen of Ilija Kajtez in the edition of German publisher LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing is the book which gives excellent insight into the history of new century ideas and theories of war and peace with characteristic author's reviews on universal values, effect and actuality of each individual theory. At the same time, the book is a good guide to the most significant books from various spheres of social sciences, mainly political philosophy and political sociology through English originals and translation into English.