

# How to Bring About “Peace on Earth”? Catholic ‘Moralities of Warfare’ and Their Shifts after 1945

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The paper explores how and why Catholic thinking and teaching about war changed during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To do so, I will examine the ways in which the two world wars and the atomic bomb shaped the Catholic perception of modern warfare, outline how declarations of the Roman Catholic Church shifted the official Catholic position, and examine the impact of those changes with regard to West Germany and the United States. I conclude that, while the fundamentals of Catholic ‘moralities of warfare,’ such as the just war concept, remained unchanged even after 1945, there were essential shifts in what can be said and what can be done about war and peace. These shifts exceeded general Catholic ambiguity on the topic, which had existed for many centuries. The paper will discuss how these shifts were linked to other fundamental developments of recent decades, such as the globalisation of the Catholic Church, the pluralisation of the religious field, and the individualisation of life style in Western countries.

Catholics, Roman Catholic Church, peace, war, modern warfare, atomic bomb, peace movement, world war, Second Vatican Council, (West) Germany, USA, contemporary history

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## Introduction

When Pope Francis addressed an international conference held at the Vatican in April 2016 to reevaluate the Roman Catholic teaching on just war, he strongly encouraged the participants to “strengthen the role of active non-violence in the face of aggression or conflict”<sup>1</sup>. The papal plea seems to speak to a wide-spread

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1 Joshua J. McElwee, “Francis Encourages Vatican Just War Conference to Re-

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impression that the Roman Catholic Church is one of the major international supporters of peace and non-violence, apparently exploiting a century-old, genuine Christian message of peace keeping and human rights. When we look back in history, however, it becomes apparent that Christianity in general, in particular the Roman Catholic Church, has not always been as peaceful and peace-loving as it seems to be today, or as many of the gospel’s passages might suggest it was.<sup>2</sup> To come to this conclusion, one does not need to take examples from the Middle Ages, such as the crusades against Muslims or the fight against heretics. It is sufficient to cast a brief glance at the last century: it began with the war of 1914 to 1918 – in which millions lost their lives – that enjoyed broad support even among Christians.<sup>3</sup> Even after the devastating experience of the Second World War, the Catholic Church did not immediately turn into the international supporter of peace and non-violence as which it is perceived today. What then, we might ask, has happened in the decades after the 1950s which brought on major shifts in what we can call Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’?

In this article, I will explore how and why Catholic thinking and teaching about war changed during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To do so, I will first examine the ways in which the two world wars and the atomic bomb shape the Catholic perception of modern warfare, first resulting in Catholic grassroots movements for peace, and then leading to major shifts in Catholic debates more broadly (1.). I will then outline how declarations of the Roman Catholic Church such as John XXIII’s encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris* (1963) and the Second Vatican Council’s apostolic constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) shifted the official Catholic positioning by adopting new perceptions of war and peace (2.). In the third section, I will look at West Germany and the United States and examine the impact that changes in official Catholic teaching had on discussions of war and peace during the 1970s and 1980s. I will especially emphasise the remaining importance of national political culture as well as the growing influence of the media (3.). In my concluding remarks (4.), I will elaborate my claim that, while the fundamentals of Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’, such as the just war concept, remained unchanged even after 1945, there were essential shifts in what can be

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vitalize Tools of Non-Violence”, in: National Catholic Reporter, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016, available at: <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/francis-encourages-vatican-just-war-conference-revitalize-tools-non-violence> [12.06.2017].

2 Cf. e.g. Arnold Angenendt, *Toleranz und Gewalt. Das Christentum zwischen Bibel und Schwert*, Münster 2007 and Andreas Holzem (ed.), *Krieg und Christentum. Religiöse Gewalttheorien in der Kriegserfahrung des Westens*, Paderborn 2009.

3 Cf. e.g. Martin Greschat, *Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Christenheit. Ein globaler Überblick*, Stuttgart 2014; Michael Fischer, *Religion, Nation, Krieg. Der Lutherchoral ‘Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott’ zwischen Befreiungskriegen und Erstem Weltkrieg*, Münster / New York 2014; Martin Lätzel, *Die Katholische Kirche im Ersten Weltkrieg. Zwischen Nationalismus und Friedenswillen*, Regensburg 2014.

said and what can be done about war and peace.<sup>4</sup> These shifts exceeded general Catholic ambiguity on the topic, which had existed for many centuries. Thus I will also discuss how the shifts in Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’ were linked to other fundamental developments of recent decades, such as the globalisation of the Catholic Church, the pluralisation of the religious field, and the individualisation of life style in Western countries.

Yet, before we start examining in what way Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’ changed in the decades immediately after the Second World War, we have to clarify who and what exactly we are talking about. Speaking of the ‘the Roman Catholic Church’ tempts us to ignore the multiple levels and actors within it. Franz-Xaver Kaufmann once distinguished four main sociological phenomena: the church of clergymen (‘Klerikerkirche’), the Catholic milieu, Catholic (sub-)culture, and political Catholicism.<sup>5</sup> Based on his model, I will focus on leading actors of the Catholic milieu like the Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken (ZdK), the umbrella organisation for the various lay groups in Germany, and organisations related to the topic, such as the peace group Pax Christi.<sup>6</sup> In addition, I will examine the church hierarchy and its key figures such as bishops, the pope in Rome, and the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965).<sup>7</sup> The church hierarchy’s global nature makes a transnational perspective inevitable so that, when necessary, I will also look at Catholic communities of other countries such as the United States and their discussions on ‘moralities of warfare’.<sup>8</sup>

But what do we mean by Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’? As outlined by the editors in their introduction, analysing ‘moralities of warfare’ involves first and foremost the “reconstruction of the formation, fixation and also the disintegration

4 Cf. Willibald Steinmetz, *Das Sagbare und das Machbare. Zum Wandel politischer Handlungsspielräume. England 1780–1867*, Stuttgart 1993.

5 Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, “Zur Einführung: Probleme und Wege einer historischen Einschätzung des II. Vatikanischen Konzils”, in: *ibid.* / Arnold Zingerle (eds), *Vatikanum II und Modernisierung. Historische, theologische und soziologische Perspektiven*, Paderborn 1996, 9–34, 16.

6 On the general development of the Catholic milieu in Germany, see Karl Gabriel, “Die Katholiken in den 50er Jahren: Restauration, Modernisierung und beginnende Auflösung eines konfessionellen Milieus”, in: Axel Schildt / Arnold Sywottek (eds), *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau. Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre*, Bonn 1998, 418–430 and *ibid.*, “Zwischen Aufbruch und Absturz in die Moderne. Die Katholische Kirche in den 60er Jahren”, in: Axel Schildt et al (eds), *Dynamische Zeiten. Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften 2000*, 528–543.

7 Cf. e.g. John Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism, 1914–1958*, Oxford 2014.

8 For a comparison, see Antonius Liedhegener, *Macht, Moral und Mehrheiten. Der politische Katholizismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und den USA seit 1960*, Baden-Baden 2006, esp. 39–44.

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of the interpretive appropriation of war”<sup>9</sup>. Translated into the realm of the Roman Catholic Church, this means to unravel the way in which Catholic teaching offered a theoretical and normative framework for church members to accept, participate, and conduct war. It is no secret at all that it was the so-called just war theory in particular which – integrated into the neo-scholastic theology during the 19<sup>th</sup> century – provided Catholics with such a collective mind-set.<sup>10</sup> But to examine the Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’ during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is of course not as easy as to trace the meandering ways of the just war concept. Not only because the nature of war changed its face as radically as the Catholic Church and Western societies did during this time, but rather because it has never been a simple thing to identify ‘war’ in the first place. The transition between war and other forms of violence is often fluid, and the dichotomy of war and peace is never as clear as it seems in everyday language. Consequently, I will not only examine the different ways in which Catholics talked and thought about war, but study how they were dealing with violence in general, and which concepts of peace they were promulgating in response.

### 1. Game Changing Events: The Second World War and the Nuclear Bomb

Rarely in the course of history were so many people constantly confronted with and directly involved in war, violence, and suffering than during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Just like everybody else, Catholics in Germany and other countries, too, had to take a stance towards both world wars and try to make sense of what was happening. To do so, they could rely on Catholic concepts such as the just war theory: its rules aimed to contain war and violence but granted each nation state the right of self-defence. But even though the just war concept seems to be straightforward, it still provides enough scope for Catholics to adopt very different attitudes, depending on their status within the Catholic Church, their political views, and their social background. This never came to light more clearly than during the First World War when Catholics all over Europe supported the violent measures of their own nation state referring to the right of self-defence. While the First World War is a well-documented example of how the Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’ could be (mis-)used, there is also proof for its independent radiance. During the Second World War, for instance, Catholic soldiers in Germany deliberately interpreted their campaign against the Soviet Union as part of a

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9 Angela Kallhoff / Thomas Schulte-Umberg: “Introduction: Moralities of Warfare and Religion” in: Kallhoff, Angela / Schulte-Umberg, Thomas (eds.): *Moralities of Warfare and Religion* (J-RaT 2018 / 1) pp. 1–5, 3.

10 For an overview on just war theory cf. Alex J. Bellamy, *Just Wars: From Cicero to Iraq*, Cambridge / Malden 2006.

fight to liberate Christian Russia. In framing their own violent actions like this, they refused to regard themselves as part of the National Socialist war of extermination, but rather thought of themselves as God's warriors.<sup>11</sup> The example illustrates once again that traditional Catholic 'moralities of warfare' were not at all outdated as an interpretative mind-set at the end of the Second World War.

The same conclusion can be drawn with regard to the immediate post-war era. Of course, the Catholic Church in Germany, as well as on the international level, explicitly condemned the war and its brutality.<sup>12</sup> But since Catholics did not blame themselves, there seemed to be no need for further debates on Catholic 'moralities of warfare'. Discussions about Catholic complicity with Nazi Germany only gained traction years later with Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde's famous article in the magazine *Hochland* and Rolf Hochhuth's play *Der Stellvertreter*.<sup>13</sup> In the meantime, Catholics in post-war Germany enjoyed being a "Victress in Ruins"<sup>14</sup> and believed in the re-Christianisation of European societies.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, the majority of Catholics stood firm with the new West German government of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and his plan to tighten the connections with the Western allies. Such support was facilitated not only by the fact that Adenauer himself was a devout Catholic, but also by a common enemy: the Soviet Union, whose communist ideology frightened liberal-democratic regimes in the West as much as its stern atheism did the Catholic Church. Fear of a Communist attack was also the main reason why the Western allies agreed for West Germany to rearm relatively soon after the war. Examination of the discussion on rearmament in the early 1950s shows that most of the Catholic bishops, theologians, and lay representatives, as well as the majority of Catholics, were in favour of establishing a new West German army. They generally argued that despite the suffering which a war would cause, each nation state had to have the right to defend the freedom of its citizens against an unjustified attack.<sup>16</sup> This argument referred to the tradi-

11 See Antonia Leugers, "Das Ende der 'klassischen' Kriegserfahrung. Katholische Soldaten im Zweiten Weltkrieg", in: Holzem (ed.), *Krieg und Christentum*, 777–810.

12 See e.g. Karen Riechert, "Der Umgang der katholischen Kirche mit historischer und juristischer Schuld anlässlich der Nürnberger Kriegsverbrecherprozesse", in: Joachim Köhler / Damian van Melis (eds), *Siegerin in Trümmern. Die Rolle der katholischen Kirche in der deutschen Nachkriegszeit*, Stuttgart 1998, 18–41.

13 See Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, "Der deutsche Katholizismus im Jahre 1933", in: *Hochland* 53,4 (1960/61), 215–239 and Rolf Hochhuth, *Der Stellvertreter. Ein christliches Trauerspiel*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1963.

14 Köhler / van Melis (eds), *Siegerin in Trümmern*.

15 See Thomas Großbölting, *Der verlorene Himmel. Glaube in Deutschland seit 1945*, Bonn 2013, 22–94.

16 Cf. Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Katholizismus und Wiederbewaffnung. Die Haltung der deutschen Katholiken gegenüber der Wehrfrage 1948–1955*, Paderborn 1981.

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tional just war theory and illustrated again that during the early 1950s, traditional Catholic teaching and thinking on war was still popular.

Beyond the huge support for the traditional right to self-defence, even in the 1950s, there were already Catholics – though few in number and with differing opinions – who sought a new teaching on war and peace. They mainly fall into three groups: the first was Pax Christi, a transnational Catholic movement for peace and reconciliation, founded in the wake of the Second World War. Its members were mostly devout older Catholic laymen who wanted to spread Catholic ideas anew amongst European peoples, and who were often stern anti-Communists.<sup>17</sup> In addition, there was a group of liberal Catholics who were generally critical towards the hierarchical organisation and many of the traditional teachings of their Church. They were often influenced by socialist ideas and favoured a peaceful settlement with the Communist states. Therefore, they rejected West German rearmament.<sup>18</sup> Finally, a growing group of young Catholics challenged the traditional Catholic ideas, too, as well as the seemingly organic relationship of the Church with the West German state. Like the Arbeitskreis katholischer Jugend gegen die Wiederaufrüstungspolitik they first expressed their objections in the discussions on rearmament.<sup>19</sup> Despite their differences, these groups took up common ideas and thoughts of renewed Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’ which had already been phrased earlier. The German peace organisation Friedensbund Deutscher Katholiken (FDK) and its theological pioneer, the Dominican priest Franziskus Maria Stratmann especially, had argued as early as the 1920s that that the concept of a ‘just/justifiable war’ was no longer possible.<sup>20</sup>

While calls for new Catholic approaches to war and peace had still been feeble during the West German debate on rearmament, they were growing louder in the controversy of nuclear weapons at the end of the 1950s. The Adenauer govern-

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17 For more details, see Daniel Gerster, “Pax Christi. Eine katholische Friedensgruppe zwischen transnationaler Verflechtung und nationaler Eigendynamik”, in: Claudia Kemper (ed.), *Gespannte Verhältnisse. Frieden und Protest in Europa während der 1970er und 1980er Jahre*, Essen 2017, 153–175.

18 See Andreas Lienkamp, “Socialism out of Christian Responsibility. The German Experiment of Left Catholicism (1945–1949)”, in: Emmanuel Gerard / Gerd-Rainer Horn (eds), *Left Catholicism. Catholics and Society in Western Europe at the Point of Liberation. 1943–1955*, Leuven 2001, 196–227.

19 See Doering-Manteuffel, *Wiederbewaffnung*, 171–179. For Catholic youth in general, cf. also Mark Edward Ruff, *The Wayward Flock. Catholic Youth in Postwar West Germany, 1945–1965*, Chapel Hill / London 2005.

20 For the FDK, cf. Dieter Riesenberger, *Die katholische Friedensbewegung in der Weimarer Republik*. Mit einem Vorwort von Walter Dirks, Düsseldorf 1976. For Franziskus Maria Stratmann, see Jörg Seiler, “Friedensbund Deutscher Katholiken oder Pax Christi? Das friedenspolitische Engagement von Franziskus Maria Stratmann 1947–1951”, in: Detlef Bald / Wolfram Wette (eds), *Friedensinitiativen in der Frühzeit des Kalten Kriegs 1945–1955*, Essen 2010, 87–106.



ment's plan to equip the newly founded army with US atomic bombs became the focal point for many alternative social groups to make their voices heard in public and to come in contact with each other. Campaigns like *Kampf dem Atomtod*, and later the *Ostermarsch* movement, brought together Social Democrats, trade unionists, scientists, and liberal Protestants and allowed them to express their opposition to nuclear armament.<sup>21</sup> Catholics in support of public protest often came from a liberal background. They clustered around two magazines: *Frankfurter Heft*, published by Walter Dirks and Eugen Kogon, two leading figures of liberal Catholics; and *Werkhefte*, which had a smaller print run but took a more radical view. In the debate on nuclear armament, liberal Catholics again vented their long-standing criticism of the West German government, which they believed was too authoritarian. They also reproached it for its close connections to the Catholic milieu and the official church authorities. For example, in his main pamphlet against nuclear armament, Walter Dirks condemned the 'united front' of the Catholic establishment with Adenauer's ruling Christian Democratic party, the CDU.<sup>22</sup> While such criticism was central to the liberal Catholics' agenda, their articles were also well-versed in the Catholic teaching on war and peace and in the political debate about nuclear weapons. They not only reiterated doubts about traditional Catholic 'moralities of warfare', they also introduced the distinction between 'strategic' and 'tactical' weapons and the term 'weapons of mass destruction' to the Catholic discourse.<sup>23</sup> Yet, as a result of their underdog position, their writings largely remained without any effect.

Yet the church hierarchy, too, gradually began to realize that it had to adapt its teachings on war and peace to the realities of modern warfare. Upon closer inspection, Pope Pius XII turned out to be one of the driving forces to adjust Catholic 'moralities of warfare' during the 1940s and 1950s, within the traditional concept of just war.<sup>24</sup> Two of his adaptations played a major role in the further Catholic discussions; to begin with, Pius XII highlighted that the doctrine of just war always had to be embedded within a more general ethics of peace. He called for international institutions to be strengthened so that they were capable of

21 For a summary of the protest movement, see Alice Holmes Cooper, *Paradoxes of Peace*. German Peace Movement since 1945, Ann Arbor, MI 1996, 26–81. On the participation of Protestant Christians, see Claudia Lepp, "Zwischen Konfrontation und Kooperation: Kirchen und soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik (1950–1983)", in: *Studies in Contemporary History* 7,3 (2010), 364–385, here 365–370.

22 Walter Dirks, "Die Gefahr der Gleichschaltung", in: *Frankfurter Hefte* (FH) 13,6 (1958), 379–391.

23 Hubertus Schulte Herbrüggen, "Atomkrieg und christliche Ethik (II)", in: FH 13,10 (1958), 686–694.

24 Concerning the positions of Pius XII, see e.g. Heinz-Gerhard Justenhoven, *Internationale Schiedsgerichtsbarkeit*. Ethische Norm und Rechtswirklichkeit, Stuttgart 2006, 43–53.

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enforcing humanitarian law. He also pleaded for measures of disarmament and active peace building. As we will see below, these issues would take central stage more and more in Catholic discourse on war and peace in the years to come. At the same time, the pope repeatedly stressed the right of each legitimate national government to defend its own citizens. There can be no doubt that Pius XII sought to legitimise the Western liberal democracies and their armament efforts against the Soviet Union. It appears that the pope even remained undecided as to whether nuclear weapons were allowed. Even though he had spoken out against the uncontrollable power of atomic explosions in as early as 1943,<sup>25</sup> there are indications that he actually supported limited nuclear warfare in later years. In a speech in Rome in October 1953, for instance, he argued that each legitimate government should be allowed to use the atomic bomb for self-defence, despite the “unimaginable destruction, suffering and terror [...] of modern war”<sup>26</sup>.

The pope’s statement indicates that traditional Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’ were no longer accepted without challenge at the end of the 1950s, and that the invention of the atomic bomb had a major play in this development. At the same time, it became obvious that Catholic thinking on war and peace was closely related to attitudes towards Communism, and in the case of Germany, to the different conclusions Catholics drew from the atrocities of the Second World War. The cleavage which arose from these issues and which would shape the West German Catholic discourse for decades could first be recognised in the debate on nuclear armament, when Catholics were discussing their disagreements in public. The foremost contribution in favour of limited nuclear armament was the declaration *Wort der Kirche* published on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1958 and signed by seven leading Roman Catholic moral theologians. Among them was Josef Höffner, the future archbishop of Cologne, who would shape Catholic life in West Germany for many years.<sup>27</sup> Following Pius XII’s 1953 statement, the theologians argued that the government had the right and duty to defend its people, and could therefore deploy and use ‘smaller atomic bombs’, a term introduced by Chancellor Adenauer himself. Such thinking was probably in line with the ‘silent majority’ of Catholics. But more radical support for nuclear armament was also to be found,<sup>28</sup>

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25 See Francis X. Winters, *Remembering Hiroshima: Was It Just?*, Farnham 2009, 225–227.

26 Quoted in Pius XII, “Über das internationale Strafrecht”, in: Herder Korrespondenz 8,2 (1953), 77–83, here 78.

27 “Wort zur christlichen Friedenspolitik und zur atomaren Rüstung”, Katholische Nachrichten Agentur (KNA), 05.05.1958. For Josef Höffner, cf. Norbert Trippen, *Joseph Kardinal Höffner (1906–1987)*. Vol. 1: Lebensweg und Wirken als christlicher Sozialwissenschaftler bis 1962, Paderborn 2009.

28 For more details on the attitude of the Catholic majority, see Daniel Gerster, *Friedensdialoge im Kalten Krieg*. Eine Geschichte der Katholiken in der Bundesrepublik, 1957–1983, Frankfurt am Main / New York 2012, 42–56 and 70–75.



most notably the statements by Gustav Gundlach, a Jesuit professor of social philosophy and part-time advisor of Pius XII.<sup>29</sup> Based on his stern anti-Communism he argued that Western democracies should be allowed to use every kind of nuclear weapon, concluding:

Even if only a manifestation of God's majesty and his order [...] should remain as success, the right and duty to defend the highest good is conceivable. Indeed, even if the world itself should perish, this would not argue against our line of reasoning.<sup>30</sup>

Such disturbing statements did not go unchallenged – and not only by liberal Catholics who publicly expressed their contrary opinion. Catholics of different political and social backgrounds became increasingly critical towards the Church and its teaching, and they spoke out against support of nuclear armament by the Church's leader. The most notable example was the public resistance by a group of Catholic academics who met at different conferences in 1957 and 1958 and who repeatedly published articles in Catholic mainstream magazines to express their rejection of any kind of nuclear weaponry. Frontrunners of the group were the legal scholar Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde and the philosopher Robert Spaemann. Both were conservative and devout Catholics, yet they questioned the way in which the Church employed natural law to fortify its positions. Instead they demanded an affirmative approach that Catholics could rely upon in modern times of insecurity and relativism. Consequently, Böckenförde and Spaemann rejected the casuistic line of thinking of the just war theory as well as the idea that nuclear bombs could be built and used in modern warfare.<sup>31</sup> Their objection to traditional Catholic teaching was on par with criticism expressed elsewhere, for example by young liberal Catholics. Ironically, even though they were arguably most in need of Catholic 'moralities of warfare', Catholic soldiers did not seem to share this line of critique. This is, at least, suggested by a number of letters penned by regular soldiers in response to an article by Böckenförde and Spaemann in the magazine *Militärseelsorge*: therein, the soldiers denied them any understanding of military matters, and instead emphasised that any Catholic soldier was in the need of clear rules and 'moralities in warfare', as provided by the just war theory.<sup>32</sup>

29 See Anton Rauscher, "Gustav Gundlach (1892–1963)", in: Rudolf Morsey et al (eds), *Zeitgeschichte in Lebensbildern*. Aus dem deutschen Katholizismus des 20. Jahrhunderts. Vol. 2, Mainz 1975, 159–177.

30 Quoted in Gustav Gundlach, *Die Ordnung der menschlichen Gesellschaft*. Vol. 2, Cologne 1964, 650. Translated by the author.

31 See Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde / Robert Spaemann, "Die Zerstörung der naturrechtlichen Kriegslehre", in: *Atomare Kampfmittel und christliche Ethik*. Diskussionsbeiträge deutscher Katholiken, München 1960, 161–196.

32 Heinz Karst, "Stellungnahme eines Soldaten zum Aufsatz 'Christliche Moral und atomare Kampfmittel' von Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde und Robert Spaemann", in:

## 2. Catholic Turning Points: *Pacem in Terris* and the Second Vatican Council

The portrayed controversy between the two academics and regular soldiers exemplifies once more what has already been stressed before: that the Church's official teaching on war and peace as well as its more general normative framing, hence the Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’, provide only one part of an individual's rationale. The attitude on war and peace that each Catholic eventually adopts also depends on his or her political view – be it conservative or liberal –, on their social position, and on their relation to the Catholic Church. This was already the case during the period of the so-called ‘Catholic milieu’ at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, when the organisational, social and moral integration of Catholics in Germany was very tight. While the Catholic milieu had begun to melt since the 1920s,<sup>33</sup> the broad individualisation of lifestyles that had been evident elsewhere even earlier only became apparent amongst German Catholics after 1945, as was evident amongst Catholic undergraduates.<sup>34</sup> It is, therefore, hardly surprising that Catholics who were committed to the topics of war and peace discussed the appropriate relationship between individual attitudes and official Catholic teaching in the ‘long 1960s’. This can be seen in the debates of the West German group of Pax Christi in which members did not only argue about parameters of a renewed Catholic understanding of war and peace, but also more broadly about the organisation's self-conception and its position within the Catholic Church. In the end, the general assembly of the German Pax Christi decided to act more independently from the church hierarchy in 1968, and to publish its own statements in the future.<sup>35</sup>

The example of Pax Christi perfectly illustrates the complex and conflicting situation in which the Catholic Church and its members discussed the renewal of the Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’ during the ‘long 1960s’. The debate was, for example, never simply about the political situation, which itself changed rapidly and fundamentally after 1945. To be sure, the leadership of the Church strongly favoured a ‘holy alliance’ with the Western allies against the presumed Communist threat, but there had always been signs to find a *modus vivendi* with the Communist regimes, too.<sup>36</sup> The Catholic debate on war and peace, however, was

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Militärseelsorge 4,2/3 (1961/62), 126–148. See also Rolf Elble, “Gedanken eines Soldaten”, in: Militärseelsorge 4,1 (1961/62), 24–30.

33 See Benjamin Ziemann, “Zur Entwicklung christlicher Religiosität in Deutschland und Westeuropa, 1900–1960”, in: Kölner Zeitung für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie 65 (2013), 99–122.

34 Cf. Christian Schmidtman, *Katholische Studierende 1945–1973. Eine Studie zur Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Paderborn 2006.

35 See Gerster, Pax Christi, 157/158.

36 For examples of the ‘holy alliance’, cf. e.g. Dianne Kirby (ed.), *Religion and the*

never only about the new technical possibilities of warfare, either. By and large, there can be no doubt that the technological transformation of warfare and the geopolitics of the Cold War had an influence on the Catholic controversy on war and peace. Yet the discussion was always embedded in larger and more general debates on the relationship between the Catholic Church and modern societies, too. Individuality and emancipation from church hierarchy were only two of many phenomena in this context: from industrialisation and urbanisation to the increasing secularisation of Western societies and the pluralisation of the religious landscape<sup>37</sup> – they all challenged the Catholic Church and its traditional teaching, and had an impact on debates on topics like the renewal of Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’ as well.

As with many Catholic debates, the one on war and peace culminated in the discussions and declarations of the Second Vatican Council. There, a ‘general assembly’ of the Roman Catholic Church gathered: approximately 2,500 church representatives – bishops, theologians, and members of religious congregations – met in regular sessions at the Vatican from 1962 to 1965. They discussed, often controversially, which reforms the Church and its organisation and teaching needed, and what its relationship with modern societies should be in the future. Besides fundamental issues such as the relationship between clergy and laity, or religious freedom, the ‘Council Fathers’ put other topics up for discussion that were crucial to contemporary societies such as war and violence, peace and reconciliation, economic cooperation and humanitarian aid. In general, they aggregated the results in statements and apostolic constitutions which were passed nearly unanimously at the end and which would – as official statements of the Church – influence the Catholic debate for the decades to come. Many of these topics had obviously been discussed before the Vatican Council. Yet the significance of the Council as *the* most important event in the history of the Roman Catholic Church during the 20<sup>th</sup> century cannot be taxed highly enough. It was in many ways a turning point for the Church’s self-perception and its relationship with modern society. With regard to its long-term impact, the content of the Council’s declarations counted perhaps less than the event per se because the Church assembly was – to put it in the words of the famous German theologian

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*Cold War*, Houndmills / New York 2003. For criticism on the concept of ‘Cold War Religion’, see Daniel Gerster, “Catholic Anti-communism, the Bomb and Perceptions of the Apocalypse in West Germany and the USA, 1945–90”, in: Matthew Grant / Benjamin Ziemann (eds), *Understanding the Imaginary War: Culture, Thought and Nuclear Conflict, 1945–90*, Manchester 2016, 189–212, here 189/190.

<sup>37</sup> Amongst the many books on the topic, cf. e.g. Detlef Pollack / Gergely Rosta, *Religion in der Moderne. Ein internationaler Vergleich*, Frankfurt am Main / New York 2015, or Großbölting, *Der verlorene Himmel*.

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Karl Rahner – “the first official self-realization of the Church as universal church”<sup>38</sup>.

The Second Vatican Council was summoned by Pius XII’s successor, Pope John XXIII. John, too, gave critical impulses to the Catholic discussion on war and peace in the run-up to the event. His reflections crystallised in his famous encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris* published in April 1963.<sup>39</sup> Strikingly, the letter reveals many similarities between the statements of John XXIII and his predecessor, Pius XII, even though the former has often been portrayed as much more liberal and reformist than the latter.<sup>40</sup> Yet both popes did not only embed their thinking in the traditional Catholic teaching on war and peace, they also framed contemporary political, economic and social problems in a very similar way. What was ‘new’ about the statements of John XXIII was the way in which he publicly advocated – again and again – peace. On the other hand, he did not simply identify ‘peace’ as the absence of ‘military war’. Instead the Pope repeatedly stressed that peace had to be achieved on different levels: politically, economically, and socially. He also insisted that further measures were needed to sustain it. Consequently, he praised – not only in *Pacem in Terris* but elsewhere – the success of local processes of reconciliation, and condemned social inequality and the wasting of resources. In this regard, John XXIII criticised new weaponry such as nuclear bombs and the arms race, without denying the use of modern weaponry in general.<sup>41</sup>

It is interesting to examine how people around the globe reacted to the message of *Pacem in Terris* which was addressed to “all men of good will”<sup>42</sup>. The strong plea for peace as well as the semantic shift, which equated ‘peace’ no longer simply with ‘no war’, both meet with great approval from Catholics and non-Catholics world-wide. It can also be said, that the papal appeal seemed to have met the

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38 Karl Rahner quoted in: Giuseppe Ruggieri, “Das II. Vatikanum. Ereignis von Weltkirche”, in: Peter Hünemann, (ed.), *Das II. Vatikanum*. Christlicher Glaube im Horizont globaler Modernisierung, Paderborn 1998, 31. Translated by the author. For the detailed history of the Second Vatican Council, cf. Giuseppe Alberigo (ed.), *Storia del concilio Vaticano II*, 5 volumes, Bologna 1995–2001.

39 Encyclical letter of His Holiness Pope John XXIII on Establishing Universal Peace on Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty: *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), 11<sup>th</sup> April 1963, Città del Vaticano 1963. Further remarks on the topic can be found in the encyclical letter *Ad Petri Cathedram* (1959) and many appeals for peace. See also Gerster, *Friedensdialoge*, 101–106.

40 See Benjamin Städter, *Verwandelte Blicke*. Eine Visual History von Kirche und Religion in der Bundesrepublik 1945–1980, Frankfurt am Main / New York 2011, 264–278.

41 See e.g. *Pacem in Terris*, § 54–56, 59–63 and 65/66. For more details on the Pope’s peace ethics, see Justenhoven, *Schiedsgerichtsbarkeit*, 54–61.

42 *Pacem in Terris*, § 1.

zeitgeist.<sup>43</sup> In West Germany especially, a large majority of the Catholic as well as the non-Catholic press warmly welcomed the Pope's detailed remarks on how peace could be built and sustained, even under the condition of the Cold War. It was, however, only during the 1970s and 1980s that some Catholic peace activists attempted to portray John XXIII as *the* peace pope and thus to monopolise him as their figurehead. In so doing, they reinforced the growing rejection of the pope's legacy amongst conservative Catholics. At the time of its publication, one of the few critics of *Pacem in Terris* was the well-known Protestant theologian Paul Tillich. He publicly complained that the encyclical letter did not include any ethical considerations on whether military and state violence was allowed.<sup>44</sup> Tillich's criticism partly matched that of conservative Catholics who demanded that the Catholic Church should firmly uphold the right of self-defence for sovereign nation states.

Questions like these also figured prominently in the Second Vatican Council's debate. Its outlines already appeared in the discussions of the commission which had to prepare the so-called *Scheme XIII* on the relationship between the Church and the world in 1962 and 1963. They were made public in a debate of the general assembly held on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> November 1964.<sup>45</sup> Most Council Fathers who commented on the relevant paragraph 25 of *Scheme XIII* generally agreed with the way the draft demanded more international commitment to peace building and keeping. Many of the speakers – such as the French Cardinal Maurice Feltin, Archbishop of Paris and, since 1950, Episcopal President of the international Pax Christi, as well as the German bishop Franz Hensbach – also emphasised the important role that the Church had to play in this context, and asked for the Council's declaration to be as close to the statements of John XXIII as possible.<sup>46</sup> While the majority did not contest such thoughts, a small minority of Council Fathers vividly questioned this position as a dangerous contraction of the Church's teaching. These bishops, who largely came from Western countries already in possession of nuclear weapons, such as George A. Beck, Archbishop of

43 See Gerster, *Friedensdialoge*, 104–106. For the interdependency of pontificates and political culture, see Wilhelm Damberg, "Pontifikate und politische Konjunkturen. Beobachtungen zur kirchlichen Zeitgeschichte", in: Catherine Bosshart-Pflüger et al (eds), *Nation und Nationalismus in Europa. Kulturelle Konstruktionen von Identitäten*. Festschrift für Urs Altermatt, Frauenfeld 2002, 749–767.

44 For Tillich's remarks, see Werner Schmauch, "Pacem in Terris. Eine internationale Tagung zur Untersuchung der Bedingungen für den Frieden, New York, 17. bis 20. Februar 1964", in: *Junge Kirche* 26 (1965).

45 See Gerster, *Friedensdialoge*, 108–115.

46 See e.g. "Intervention des Bischofs von Essen, Dr. Franz Hengsbach, zum Kapitel V, Absatz 'Über die Festigung des Friedens' im Schema 'Die Kirche in der Welt von heute', 10<sup>th</sup> November 1964", Archiv des Katholischen Militärbischofamt AR 094 (36-01-01-04).

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Liverpool, and Philip M. Hannan, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, D.C., argued that the Council should not condemn the use of modern weaponry such as nuclear bombs but rather underline how important they were for the defence of democracy and liberty.<sup>47</sup> Because the new Pope Paul VI aimed for the broadest possible agreement amongst the Council Fathers, such objections lead to major revisions of the text before it was adopted as part of the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1965.<sup>48</sup>

When reading *Gaudium et Spes* one has to keep in mind that it is by nature a compromise, and that it tries to include as many aspects of the Catholic discussions on war and peace as possible without tending too much to one side. It is therefore hardly surprising that the fourteen paragraphs of the constitution which relate to the topic (§ 77–90) include ideas about the possibility of warfare in modern times, which basically rely on the remarks of Pius XII, as well as the new semantics of peace, which John XXIII had strongly promoted in his statements such as the encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris*. Hence, the document emphasises the general need for processes of reconciliation and disarmament and for more commitment to social equality on a global scale. Consequently, *Gaudium et Spes* condemns the inhumanity of war, labels modern weaponry such as atomic, biological and chemical bombs as “dangerous” and declares that “these weapons can inflict massive and indiscriminate destruction”<sup>49</sup>. Yet at the same time, it stresses that “governments cannot be denied the right to legitimate defence once every means of peaceful settlement has been exhausted”<sup>50</sup>. Such wording must be understood as a reference to the just war doctrine, without using the term itself, leaving open the question of nuclear armament. This shows that the Second Vatican Council did not abandon traditional Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’. Standing in line with former papal remarks, it reformulated substantial contents such as the just war theory under the impression of modern weaponry, and embedded it into a broader concept of peace building and peace keeping. It also stressed the autonomy that each Catholic had to decide on his own actions and moralities – this was perhaps the most surprising step, one that would have a profound effect on the Catholic Church and community.<sup>51</sup>

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47 See Alberigo, Storico. Vol. 4, 350. For further information, see Patricia F. McNeal, *Harder than War. Catholic Peacemaking in Twentieth-Century America*, New Brunswick, NJ 1992, 100–102.

48 On the Church in the Modern World – *Gaudium et Spes*, promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1965, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html) [23.07.2017].

49 *Gaudium et Spes*, § 80.

50 *Ibid.*, § 79.

51 Regarding the military service, see e.g. *Gaudium et Spes*, § 79. For more details, see Rudolf Uertz, *Vom Gottesrecht zum Menschenrecht. Das katholische Staatsdenken in*



### 3. Transforming Everyday Moralities: Debates on the Vietnam War and Rearmament

Although *Gaudium et Spes* met with broad reception after its release, like all declarations of the Second Vatican Council it did not have an immediate impact on Catholic discourse. Rather, it took effect by being widely discussed in Catholic controversies on war, violence, and peace in the decades which followed. In this process, assemblies held in order to implement the Council's teaching into the national context by different national Catholic churches during the late 1960s and early 1970s played an important role. In Germany, for instance, the so-called 'Würzburger Synode' established a setting in which bishops, theologians, and laymen could meet and discuss from 1972 to 1975. Yet, even though surveys which were conducted before the event had suggested that each Catholic would be able to speak out freely, the synod offered only a very limited space for communication. Issues considered too troubling were not discussed at all.<sup>52</sup> Typical lines of conflict also came to the fore when the members of the synod dealt with issues of peace and development aid, along with those of war and disarmament. Conservative Catholics such as the CDU's defence expert Alois Mertes already criticised the fact that both fields had to be discussed together. He complained: "In the Church's discussion peace is too often identified with development aid; as if the oppression of human rights in Communist states and the arms race between East and West would be negligible causes of tension."<sup>53</sup> Despite such fundamental criticism, the synod passed the declaration *Der Beitrag der katholischen Kirche in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland für Entwicklung und Frieden* with a huge majority.<sup>54</sup> The document aimed to translate the decisions of *Gaudium et Spes* into the pastoral reality of the West German Catholic community.

Both development aid and human rights were instrumental topics in transforming the perception and moralities of war and peace in Catholic everyday life during the 'long 1960s'. This was also true for other topics such as the Vietnam War, which stirred up intense public debate in Western countries, not least West

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Deutschland von der Französischen Revolution bis zum II. Vatikanischen Konzil (1789–1965), Paderborn 2005, 470–482.

52 See Benjamin Ziemann, *Katholische Kirche und Sozialwissenschaften 1945–1975*, Göttingen 2007, 167–186. For more information on the synod's discussion on war and peace, see Gerster, *Friedensdialoge*, 188–193.

53 "Beitrag von Alois Mertes auf der 5. Vollversammlung der Synode, 22.–25.05.1974", *Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik Sankt Augustin*, Nachlass Mertes I 403–172/3.

54 Gemeinsame Synode, "Der Beitrag der katholischen Kirche in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland für Entwicklung und Frieden", in: Ludwig Bertsch (ed.), *Gemeinsame Synode der Bischöfe der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Offizielle Gesamtausgabe. Vol. 1: Offizielle Beschlüsse der Vollversammlung, Freiburg 1989 (1977), 470–510.

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Germany. As described in more detail elsewhere, the military intervention of the United States in Vietnam fuelled increasingly radical protests amongst left activists and students.<sup>55</sup> Catholic students participated in these protests, too, but their numbers remained small. In fact, Catholic commitment typically only existed in cities such as Berlin, Frankfurt, and Bochum where Catholic student parishes (‘Hochschulgemeinden’) had been politically active before. For these Catholic student parishes, the Vietnam War basically offered a window of opportunity to show their political commitment in public and, even more importantly, to come into close contact with non-Catholic student groups. The Catholic student community in Bochum, for instance, planned to organise a Vietnam Information Day together with the Socialist Students Union (SDS) and Protestant groups. Yet opposition by the community’s priest prevented the cooperation, and instead the event was organised solely by Christian students.<sup>56</sup> As was the case in Bochum, the vast majority of Catholic students and peace activists withdrew from the larger protest movement, under the pressure of church officials and conservative Catholics. Instead, they got involved into separate Christian events which promoted commitment for human rights and fair trade, or activities such as street protests and sit-ins rather than political discussions of war, violence and peace.<sup>57</sup>

Even though the increasing emphasis on sustainable peace often tended to neglect issues of war and violence, there were also contradicting developments. They can be discovered, for instance, when examining discussions of the Vietnam War amongst US Catholics. Again, it becomes clear that the remarks of individual Catholics depended on political opinions, social status, and so on. Moreover, the comparison between the US and West German Catholic communities clearly exposes fundamental differences caused by political culture and historical context. The debate on war and peace among US Catholics was far more polarised than the one among their West German peers. One reason for this is that groups such as the Catholic Worker Movement institutionalised what can be called a ‘Catholic pacifism’ in the 1930s at the latest.<sup>58</sup> Their political commitment put

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55 See e.g. Jost Dülffer, “Die Anti-Vietnamkriegs-Bewegung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (2003)”, in: *ibid.* (ed.), *Frieden stiften. Deeskalations- und Friedenspolitik im 20. Jahrhundert*, Köln 2008, 316–331.

56 See “Dokumentation ‘Gemeindeauftrag, Theologie und Gottesdienst – politisch gesehen: Modell KSG Bochum in Aktionen, Analysen und Berichten’, 12<sup>th</sup> February 1968”, Historisches Archiv des Erzbistums Köln (AEK) DP KDSE 2052. For more details, see Thomas Großbölting, “Zwischen Kontestation und Beharrung. Katholische Studierende und die Studentenbewegung”, in: *Westfälische Forschungen* 48 (1998), 157–189, here 162–164.

57 See Lepp, *Konfrontation*, 379–384. Cf. also Bastian Hein, *Die Westdeutschen und die Dritte Welt. Entwicklungspolitik und Entwicklungsdienste zwischen Reform und Revolution 1959–1974*, München 2006.

58 For more details on US Catholic pacifism, cf. Anne Klejment / Nancy Roberts

much greater pressure on other US Catholics to position themselves. As the debate on the Vietnam war was much more politicized to begin with, it is hardly surprising that US Catholics took a much more radical stance against the war than the Germans. The most famous example is the so-called ‘Catholic Resistance’, a small, informal group headed by Daniel and Philip Berrigan, two brothers and Catholic priests. The group expressed its opposition against the war in Vietnam by participating in the public anti-war movement and by publishing political statements. Yet they also resorted to hands-on tactics, such as draft burning or spilling blood on warheads.<sup>59</sup> In doing so, they expressed their belief that ‘counter-violence’ was allowed in order to protest against what they thought was unjustified violence in the Vietnam War. They gladly accepted that their acts would attract further attention because they performed them in an otherwise peaceful Catholic context.<sup>60</sup>

The actions of the Berrigan Brothers indicate that the topic of violence was still on the table, despite the general transformation of Catholic discourse towards peace building and keeping. Compared with earlier discussions, however, the focus had shifted away from the issue of the nation state’s right of self-defence towards the question of whether – and if so, when – individuals or groups were allowed to use violence as an act of resistance against oppression. This matter was debated particularly in Latin America and other parts of the developing world, where Catholic liberation theologians had sided with poor and suppressed people since the 1950s. While Catholics who actually got involved in these controversies remained a small group, the moral questions they posed concerned the whole Church.<sup>61</sup> Among West German Christians, too, the ideas of liberation theology were discussed controversially, especially as the Red Army Faction turned towards violent actions, burning down department stores first, and abducting and killing people later. Against this background, German theologians began dealing with liberation theology and its relation with political violence critically. Most of these theologians were Protestants such as Jürgen Moltmann, Dorothee Sölle and

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(eds), *American Catholic Pacifism. The Influence of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement*, Westport, CT 1996, and Lilah Danielson, *Not By Might. Christianity, Nonviolence, and American Radicalism, 1919–1963*, unpublished PhD, Austin, TX 2003.

59 See McNeal, *Harder than War*, 173–210.

60 On the concurrency between conflict and competition, see Teresa Koloma Beck / Tobias Werron: “Gewaltwettbewerb. ‘Gewalt’ in globalen Konkurrenzen um Aufmerksamkeit und Legitimität”, in: *Leviathan* 41 (2013) (Sonderband 28), 1–29.

61 For more details on the liberation theology, see e. g. Roland Spliesgart, “Theologie und ‘Dritte Welt’”, in: Siegfried Hermle (ed.), *Umbrüche. Der deutsche Protestantismus und die sozialen Bewegungen der 1960er und 1970er Jahre*, Göttingen 2007, 189–209, and Nikolaus Werz, “Theologie der Befreiung in Lateinamerika”, in: Bernd Oberdorfer / Peter Waldmann (eds), *Die Ambivalenz des Religiösen. Religionen als Friedensstifter und Gewalterzeuger*, Freiburg 2008, 107–131.

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Helmut Gollwitzer, but among them were also a few Catholics, such as Karl Rahner and Johann Baptist Metz. All of them agreed that in a democracy, violence has to be illegal. Yet they disagreed on whether, in politically oppressive systems, violence as ‘counter-violence’ was allowed. While Gollwitzer and Sölle tended to agree, Metz stressed how important it was to differentiate between ‘pure violence’ and ‘revolutionary violence’.<sup>62</sup>

The controversies on non-governmental violence largely pushed concerns about the Cold War and nuclear weaponry into the background during the 1970s.<sup>63</sup> Yet they returned with full force at the end of the decade, when the administration of US President Jimmy Carter publicly announced plans to build the neutron bomb, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and NATO decided to deploy new nuclear weapons in Western Europe if the Soviet Union did not withdraw parts of its own arsenal. The latter, the so-called ‘NATO Double-Track Decision’, met with widespread disapproval in Western societies, fuelled discussions on war and peace, and caused the emergence of large peace movements. In West Germany, the peace movement united Protestant Christians, Social Democrats, and Communists as well as long-time environmental and peace activists. The reasons why people were protesting against rearmament were as diverse as their origins were: from general opposition to the federal government to actual rejection of the NATO plan, to a vague sense of fear. What united these groups was the goal of stopping Western rearmament. In order to achieve this, they organized protests both on the local and federal level; for instance, at the ‘Evangelischer Kirchentag’, an assembly of West German Protestants in Hannover, in June 1981. Around 100,000 people protested against the NATO Double-Track Decision at the event, setting off more protests throughout the entire country.<sup>64</sup>

West German Catholics also participated in public peace protests during the early 1980s. It is difficult to say how many exactly, but their number turned out to be much higher compared to previous decades. Yet most Catholics took part as individuals rather than as representatives of Catholic organisations. In fact, only the informal group Initiative Kirche von unten (IKvu), which had brought together critical Catholics since the late 1970s, actively worked together with the official West German peace movement. By contrast, groups such as Pax Christi and the youth organisation Bund Deutscher Katholischer Jugend (BDKJ) sought informal cooperation only.<sup>65</sup> Catholic reservation about participating in public

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62 See Pascal Eitler, ‘*Gott ist tot – Gott ist rot*’. Max Horkheimer und die Politisierung der Religion um 1968, Frankfurt am Main 2009, 293–310.

63 On the imaginary of the Cold War, cf. Grant / Ziemann (eds), *Understanding the Imaginary War*.

64 For more details on the West German peace movement of the early 1980s, see Holmes Cooper, *Paradoxes of Peace*, 151–210. For the participation of West German Protestants, see Lepp, *Konfrontation*, 379–384.

65 For more details on the participation of Catholic groups, see Helmut Zander, *Die*

protest had certainly very different reasons, but it seems obvious that fear of denunciation and hostility by conservative Catholics was one of them. Indeed, examining the Catholic debates on war and peace in West Germany shows the extent to which questions of power, public influence, and media attention took effect. A case in point are the struggles between the Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken and other Catholic groups about the organisation of the Katholikentag, a biennial assembly of German Catholics in Düsseldorf in September 1982.<sup>66</sup> The substantial differences, however, were never insurmountable; liberals as well as conservatives had taken up the general shift in Catholic thinking about war and peace, and mainly differed in their approach towards the actual political situation.<sup>67</sup>

It can be shown, when comparing the two pastoral letters published by the US and West German bishop assemblies in 1983, that such cleavages did not have to be caused by different political views or social status alone, but also by different political culture and historical context.<sup>68</sup> In its statement *The Challenge of Peace*, the American episcopate referred very directly to the contemporary policy of the conservative administration of US President Ronald Reagan, which was characterised by more rearmament and the semantics of threat. In an unusually direct manner, the bishops contradicted this approach and asked for a new kind of peace ethics, which should include far-reaching steps towards disarmament and an end to the ideological confrontation. Yet despite such demands, the episcopate did not deny the nation state the right of self-defence, including the temporary use of nuclear weapons for deterrence.<sup>69</sup> Like their US colleagues, the West German bishops reasoned not only with issues of war and Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’ alone, but with ethics that included demands for a multi-layered peace approach in their pastoral letter *Gerechtigkeit schafft Frieden*. Thus, they took up ideas by John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council. The German episcopate, however, did not focus on contemporary political debates, but rather formulated more general guidelines regarding the use of weaponry in modern times. It therefore did

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*Christen und die Friedensbewegungen in beiden deutschen Staaten*. Beiträge zu einem Vergleich für die Jahre 1978–1987, Berlin 1989, 100–146.

66 See Gerster, *Friedensdialoge*, 237–244.

67 See *ibid.*, 220–289.

68 See Antonius Liedhegener, “‘The Challenge of Peace’ – ‘Gerechtigkeit schafft Frieden’. Der amerikanische und deutsche Katholizismus in der außen- und sicherheitspolitischen Kontroverse um NATO-Doppelbeschluss und Nachrüstung”, in: Werner Kremp / Berthold Meyer (eds), *Religion und Zivilreligion im Atlantischen Bündnis*, Trier 2001, 273–291.

69 For the German translation, see Bischofskonferenz der USA, “Die Herausforderung des Friedens – Gottes Verheißung und unsere Antwort”, in: *Bischöfe zum Frieden*, ed. by the Sekretariat der DBK, Bonn 1983, 5–130. For more details on ‘The Challenge of Peace’, see McNeal, *Harder than War*, 211–258.

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not comment on the circumstances under which governments were allowed to build, deploy, and use nuclear weapons. Yet the bishops praised situations in which individuals and groups voluntarily refused to use violence to enforce their own interests. Thereby they implicitly confirmed the state monopoly on the use of force, as stipulated in the just war theory.<sup>70</sup>

### 4. Conclusion

The pastoral letters published by the US and West German episcopates in 1983 unmistakably exemplify that key elements of the Catholic teaching on war and peace such as the just war theory have remained unchanged until today. They still serve as normative framing for what we can call Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’. This is confirmed, too, by a statement from Pope Francis, who in 2014 endorsed the US air strikes against the so-called ‘Islamic State of Iraq and Syria’ (ISIS) as “just war”.<sup>71</sup> Yet the media attention drawn by the Pope’s statement shows that it is no longer customary for Catholic leaders to speak out in support of waging war and using violence. Even though, in its fundamentals, Catholic ‘moralities of warfare’ have remained the same, the boundaries of what can be said and done about war and peace have shifted, at least in discussions of Western societies. Since the ‘long 1960s’ and in sync with the larger public discourse, Catholic discussions of war and peace have shifted away from a nation state’s right of self-defence to an emphasis on peace building and peace keeping, which call for disarmament, reconciliation, and development aid. These themes still dominate the discourse today, even though violence and the right to use (nuclear) weapons have been discussed time and again, for instance, in debates on liberation theology or rearmament during the 1970s and 1980s.

How can we explain the extensive shift in Catholic semantics on war and peace in the decades since 1945? First, Catholic teaching on war and peace has been ambiguous for many centuries. Throughout history, the church hierarchy, as well as Catholics more broadly, have neither unequivocally favoured war, nor unreservedly supported peace. Indeed, most of the time, their stance has been somewhere in between. Yet in the shadow of two world wars and in the face of nuclear warfare, such ambiguity no longer sufficed. Calls for effective peace keeping and peace building, as well as more commitment to development aid and disarmament, has become louder and louder since the 1950s. A rapidly growing number of Catholics, including leading church figures, have responded to these

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. *Gerechtigkeit schafft Frieden*. Wort der deutschen Bischofskonferenz zum Frieden, ed. by Sekretariat der DBK, Bonn 1983.

<sup>71</sup> See e.g. “Pope Francis: US Action against ISIS a ‘Just War’”, in: CBN News, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2014, <http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2014/August/Pope-Francis-US-Action-against-ISIS-a-Just-War> [30.06.2017].



calls. On this question, the emerging consensus is astonishing. It can only be understood if we embed the changing thinking about war and peace within the larger changes that the Catholic Church was undergoing at the same time, above all the globalisation of the Catholic Church itself. It drew the Church's attention away from Europe to the poverty and inequality in developing countries. At the same time, the Church was challenged by the pluralisation of the religious field and the individualisation of lifestyle and religious belief. Both resulted in the repositioning of the Catholic Church on different issues, amongst them the question of war and peace.

The exposure of close links between broader social changes and shifts in Catholic semantics on war and peace raises the question of the consequences this may have; not only for the content of Catholic 'moralities of warfare', but also for the way they take shape in society. Historically, very few Catholics ever formed their opinion on war and peace by referring to the Church's teaching only. On the contrary, for the vast majority of Catholics, the question of how they have to judge and act has always been related to further factors, such as their political position, their status within the Catholic community, their social background, and so on. Comparing the situation of Catholics in the United States with those in West Germany has furthermore revealed the important role national political culture and different historical experiences play. During the last decades, there have been few changes in these factors which fundamentally influence how individual Catholics form their personal attitude, and hence their 'morality of warfare'. What did change radically, however, was their relationship with their church; reflecting broader social trends such as individualisation and pluralisation, their ties to its official teachings have dissolved more and more. At the same time, other factors such as the media have had an ever greater influence on their opinions.<sup>72</sup> What do these changes mean for the future? As fewer and fewer Catholics follow the Church's official line, Catholic opinion on 'moralities of warfare' will probably become more diverse and polarised. Its relevance in political discourse and social life, meanwhile, will likely decline further.

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. Nicolai Hannig, *Die Religion der Öffentlichkeit. Kirche, Religion und Medien in der Bundesrepublik 1945–1980*, Göttingen 2010.

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- Bischofskonferenz der USA, “Die Herausforderung des Friedens – Gottes Verheißung und unsere Antwort”, in: *Bischöfe zum Frieden*, ed. by the Sekretariat der DBK, Bonn 1983, 5–130.
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