

What's in a War?

To answer the question forthrightly: we all have a perfectly good idea what is in a war. Although I myself have never been in a war, we were brought up with the stories of the German occupation of the Netherlands in WWII (1940-1945), and my father as a corporal in the Dutch army fought a short and desperate war against the German occupation where he shot some German airplanes with the heavy machinegun. In the war, he had to go in hiding for several years, not to be captured by the Germans to work in their war industry. And we have seen the terrible footage of the war in Ukraine so far, which moves us to tears. Murder, deceit, suffering, loss, bloodshed, crimes, grief – that's in a war. To mention but a few atrocities. And most importantly: our minds are in a war, which is the worst atrocity. I will come to this later. So, why the question?

Special military operation or Police action?

Well, in February 2022 the Russian president *Vladimir Putin* lived up to the wrong meaning of his first name (“ruler of the world”) and started a “war” against Ukraine. Actually, he started this “war” already in 2014 by invading Crimea and parts of the Donbas. But on 24 February, he actually “invaded” the entire Ukraine. And not two weeks later, he made a law against using the words “war, invasion, attack” when referring to what he is doing there. Of course, in this law, these very words are used to declare their own illegality, which is a bit silly. According to this law, it should be called “a special military operation”. Why? And is this any different from a “war”? Should we care about this word-game? Yes and no.

Going to war without naming it, or by naming it by any other word, is by no means a new tactic. When invading Vietnam and Korea, the American government declared these as “police actions”. And the Dutch military interventions during the Indonesian National Revolution were called a “police action” as well by the Dutch government. Indonesia was one of our last colonies, by the way. Many military actions in recent history were not even officially declared at all. Since WWII, formal declarations of War have been rare, especially when the major military powers were involved. As opposed to “total war” (which has a nasty *Armageddish* ring to it), these “small wars” were either not declared, or called a “police action”. This word is actually a Dutch invention, first used in 1883 when the Netherlands and English forces tried to liberate the crew of the SS *Nisero*, who were held hostage.

From Russia with Inspiration

So, *Putin* is in good company, for his predecessor *Tsar Peter the Great* (1672-1725) also looked at the Dutch. Peter turned the local *Tsardom Russia* into a European power and named the city of St. Petersburg after himself, once the capital of Russia - although between 1924 and 1991 it was called Leningrad, and in 1917 the Bolsheviks moved their government to Moscow. Tsar Peter already went to the Netherlands for inspiration when he wanted to build the Russian Navy, which he used to his advantage to gain control over the Black Sea from the Ottoman (now Turkish) empire. When I was a little boy, my father (who went to Russia several times as a mining engineer) learned himself some Russian, and I was fascinated by the beautiful Cyrillic script of this language and I love the sound of the language as well – and not to forget the sound of their music*. Together we took a small course in Russian. I don't speak Russian still, but I can read the script and I know many Russian words. This I surely have in common with *Vladimir*. Hence I know that almost all Russian naval words come from this cooperation with the Dutch in the seventeenth century. Words like *флагшток* (*vlaggenstok* –

flagstaff), рейс (reis – journey), and киль (kiel – keel). Appropriately, from the German they learned фейерверк (Feuerwerk – fireworks), from the English the word гамбургер (hamburger), from the French шансон (chanson – song) and шампанское (champagne), and from the Italian вино (vino – wijn). And what did we all learn from the Russian language? Surprisingly not much more than дача (Dacha), спутник (Sputnik) and тройка (Troika), and the German learned the word граница (Grenze – Border), although nowadays the *Kremlin* seems to have forgotten the meaning of this word themselves. So, the Russian people are very eager to learn from us, much more than *vice versa*.

The Dutch in those days were the leading power in the world, you know, in possession of an enormous Navy with which they conquered, enslaved and looted a large part of the planet. Yes, we Dutch may look cute with our adorable windmills, clogs and tulips, but make no mistake – we used to compete with the *crème de la crème* in specialmilitaryoperations-land! And it is only lucky for the rest of the world that in 1959 we found our own energy source beneath our own soil in one of the largest gas-bubbles in the world, so we didn't have to go and steel it from our neighbours, which is what some other countries did that were not so lucky. Actually, this bubble is almost empty now and chances are that the pipeline we almost finished for the Russian gas supply is not going to get flushed anytime soon now. But no worries, we have no real army left these days, only chickens, pigs and cows. And tulips of course. We will simply flower you into submission. Flower power *après la lettre*. Yes, we know our French, we used to be conquered by them and we still have fond memories of Napoleon as well, just like *Peter the Great* did and *Putin* does. That's why we still use the slogan "*Je maintiendrai*", which is the official motto of the *House of Orange Nassau*, our peaceful Royal Family, currently headed by King Alexander and his lovely wife Queen Maxima. It means "I will uphold", but these days we need some rhetorical Viagra for that, by lack of a real army. But I digress.

If *Putin* would care to look a bit further into Dutch history for inspiration, he would see that nowadays, the Dutch have found an entirely new and peaceful way of conquering their (mostly inland) opponents. It is called "*Polderen*", referring to the way the Dutch have turned water into land (a "*Polder*") by working together. So it denotes conquering land by cooperation instead of by going to war. It now means that political opponents talk with each other for ever and ever, until all parties involved are so tired and numb that they will sign any deal just to be able to get it over with and have a good night's sleep. And after that they happily conform to the deal without complaining, for they all feel that they have been heard (*ad nauseam*) and no one remembers exactly what they have consigned to. For decades this has served our country peacefully, and by postponing all the real issues and instead only talking about them, we have turned into a happy but unruly little bunch of cheese eaters.

Nothing new under the sun

The *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, eleventh edition describes "police action" in its 1933 issue as "a localized military action undertaken without formal declaration of war by regular armed forces against persons (as guerrillas or aggressors) held to be violators of international peace and order". Since the emergence of this construction, the US, the Dutch, Indian, Nigerian and Indonesian authorities used this flexible euphemism to cover up whatever atrocities they were really committing. Other than this, officially the word "police action" doesn't exist. It is called "*enforcement action*" and legalized in the Security Council in art. 53 (local actions) and art. 42 (global actions).

So, there is nothing new under the sun. "*He who is without sin, cast the first stone*". And because there is currently no one in the world without sins, there is also no one who could be a believable mediator in *Putin's* specialmilitaryoperation. This is showing the extent of the world's moral bankruptcy these days. We have all made this possible by acting and not acting.

Nothing new? Actually, that is not completely true. What is new in *Putin's* approach is to muzzle journalism by declaring the use of the normal other terms, like “war, invasion, attack” illegal and punishable. This poses a new hurdle in providing objective information about what is really going on in *Ukraine*. While *Putin* is risking to start the Third World Specialmilitaryoperation, journalists and writers all around this world are not allowed to report about this in the usual way – which is by telling the truth. And that is different. This is a bit unsportsmanlike. A tad *Putinesque* perhaps. And I can't help but pointing out the silliness in this as well, as clearly can be seen in Fawlty Towers (“don't mention the Specialmilitaryoperation”).

What's in a Word?

Well, it is clear by now that *Putin* didn't want to use the word war, nor did he even want to refer to it as “police action” or “enforcement action” because these terms are more or less defined and the euphemism has lost its power. And he had to call it something to be able to talk about it. He could hardly order his troops to “Go to ... umm, well, don't just stand there, Go!”. So he tries his luck with the word “specialmilitaryoperation”. And it also is a bit similar to the words Special Forces, that have a well known and often used military connotation, and the NATO also uses this officially. It sounds like something intelligent and innocent you can do with an army. A sort of military practice or game. How clever.

Anyway, since the specialmilitaryoperation in Ukraine I brushed up on my literature and already started to read “*The Art of Specialmilitaryoperation*” by the Chinese general *Sun Tzu* (5th century B.C.) a standard work about military strategy. I am sure dear *Vladimir* has read it too. And as soon as I have finished that book, I plan to read the famous “*Specialmilitaryoperation and Peace*” by the Russian author *Leo Tolstoy*. Written in 1865, it is a fascinating account of the Russian aristocracy during the Napoleonic specialmilitaryoperations. It is an historical fiction novel and a philosophical work as well. That should provide for a wonderful combination of words and thoughts for me to process. Let us all Putin a lot of Love as well, because, after all, let's make Love, not Specialmilitaryoperation.

Paraphrasing *William Shakespeare*, the master wordsmith of this planet who invented around 1700 new words:

“What's in a word? That which we call a War by any other name would sound as wrong”.

Going beyond all of this – an open invitation to the real *Vladimir*

I almost finished my Tale at this point, being very charmed by, even proud of the result. This alarmed me. Pride is a destructive emotion, a mind made perversity. And then I realized the higher truth. What we see at this moment in time of the apparent *Vladimir Putin*, is not the real *Vladimir*. The real *Vladimir* is the sweet little Babyboy that was born in Leningrad in 1952. He is only eleven years older than I am. He could be my elder brother – or his reincarnation. It so happens that I lost a brother indeed, who was born in 1952, only 2 days after *Vladimir*. His name was Rudy. He died of *cystic fibrosis* when he was seven years old, and I am so lucky to live with *cystic fibrosis* after him for so long, only because of new medication and better therapies that came along and because I lived in a little world without wars and troubled Presidents. *Rudy* was a sweet boy and I am sure, that *Vladimir* was too. Like my parents, *Vladimir's* parents also started a second birth wave after tragically losing even two previous sons, *Victor* and *Albert*. *Vladimir* was meant to console his parents in the loss and grief for their dead

children. Was he also meant to cause hundreds of parents grief by starting military operations as a President? And were all the other Presidents of the world at any time meant to do the same? Oneness moves in strange ways indeed.



Vladimir studied Law (just like me) but now (unlike me) thinks he is the president of Russia, but this is only a belief system he got conditioned into. He thinks that Russia should be great again by conquering parts of territory that were lost in previous wars and conflicts, but there is no territory to conquer. This is all Earth and it belongs to no one, we all belong to it. Russia is a construct of separation of the mind as well, as is the USA, China or The Netherlands. It doesn't really exist. The baby *Vladimir* did not know of Russia, and he was right. Underneath the crippling crust of conditioning and thoughts, *Vladimir Putin* still is the innocent little boy that his parents were so glad to have as a child.

At this moment in time, it is probably very hard, if not impossible, for *Vladimir* to see this, to discover this. To realize that he was tricked and manipulated into systems of thought and beliefs that forced him into this impossible role he is performing today. By his father, his political colleagues, by history. No person can behave beyond the level of awareness that he has. But I can't imagine that, as a baby, he aspired to 70 years later be in this deplorable and stressful situation at all. Nothing could have been further from his then innocent mind. He'd rather become a normal man, with a good wife and lovely children, having an ordinary job and a nice dog to walk with under the sun. But this is not what happened. Life is what happened, and conditioning. And now he finds himself amidst two armies that are ready to fight, to fight even brothers and family, like *Arjuna* found himself in the epic war Tale of the *Bhagavad Gita*. But unlike the common explanation of this Tale, Debbie and I, talking about this yesterday, think that *Arjuna* overcame his conditioning, and even saw through the game of war that *Krishna* was presenting to him. And that in the end, he refused to fight and managed to dissolve his mind and thoughts, resting in tranquility.

But nobody can talk to *President Putin* about this. It is impossible, because this is an illusion, a concept. Only if there still is a shadow of doubt in the mind of the President, some change might happen. For where there is a shadow of doubt, the sun of enlightening is not far away either. This shadow could go search for its origin and find the right direction again, where it will find the light and a peace that passeth all understanding. And when this happens, there will only be winners. And then *Putin* can be a real President to the people, and inspire them to a prosperity that they have never known before. He and they would be really free. It could in a way be comparable to what happened to *Nelson Mandela* who became enlightened when in prison for so long, although there are obvious differences as well. Perhaps then he will be able to fulfill the correct meaning of his first name, *Vladimir* – ruler of the world. Not the world of the mind, but the world of the Self. This world is not morally bankrupt at all. It only looks like that on the surface. And the surface is more than close to what is beneath.

Let us stay free from authority – inside and outside

It is only a stepless step from the worlds of war to the heavens of liberation. The further we think we are from enlightenment, the closer we are to it as well. We travel the world in a circular motion, and being as far as possible from the starting point of the unborn mind, we are again not even one step away from it as well. And while it seems unlikely, at the same time it is much easier to make this "step" than any specialmilitaryoperation. It could even happen spontaneously. It is like the apple that takes time to ripen on the tree, but when it falls, it falls suddenly.

In the words of Hsin Hsin Ming:**

*“The Great Way is not difficult for those not attached to preferences.
When neither love nor hate arises, all is clear and undisguised.
Separate by the smallest amount, however,
and you are as far from it as heaven is from earth.”*

We are not afraid of a new World War. The World War is not old or new, it is the war in the mind that is going on timelessly since *homo sapiens* got lost in this illusion of being (in) the mind. It is a continuous process. Every now and then episodes of warfare emerge, and it is this what we call war. But this is only the outer appearance of the war that is going on continuously in our minds.

Only if we stop this inner war, lose our preferences, stop striving for a certain outcome, be it political, cultural, emotional, religious, social, military or any other conceptual result, all happens by itself and turns out to be already complete. A complete Vladimir, a complete Russia, a complete world, a complete Oneness. They are all the same.

And it is paramount that we **all** need to do this. Not only Vladimir Putin, Volodymyr Zelensky, Jo Biden, or Xi Jinping. All humans. For we are all fighting our little silly wars on a daily basis, competing with, comparing to, complaining about one another. We all need to be free of this, free from conditioning. Free from the inside authority of the mind. And free from the outside authority we provide others with. We need to think for ourselves only. We all need to read Jiddu Krishnamurti's **Freedom from the Known**. And [his speech](#) in which he dissolved the Order for which other people had destined him as a leader – but he didn't want people to organize themselves into Orders or groups, he wanted everyone to be free, independent, to think only for themselves and not for others. I think that as long as I give away my innate power to institutions that are set up to rule over me, these disasters like wars are going to keep happening. This is why later in life I stopped to vote. Voting is separating. When I vote, I say: “I like you, but not the other. I trust you, but distrust the other. I love you, but hate the other”. And these people whom I would vote to entrust with such enormous powers, can't handle those. This is proven time and time again. A single person, or a group of people like a government, is not able to deal with all the conflicting powers on the scale of a country, let alone a group of countries like NATO, Warsaw Pact, or a group of governments like European Communion, United States etcetera. These complex and abstract structures are causing the conflicts, not solving them. Let me first try to be at peace with and compassionate to the individual members of my own family, my direct neighbours, perhaps the people of my own little hamlet. This is an enormous task already, let me not endeavor more than I am able to on my small human scale. If we all try to fulfill this task for ourselves, we will not need larger systems and scales to rule over us and throw us into wars that we didn't chose or want.

We already belong to Divinity

We as individuals should not want to “belong to” any structure that we made up in the mind. Not to another individual as in a marriage or a family, not to a group or a club of people. Certainly not to a nation, and most definitely not to a group of nations. We think this is causing unification, but in fact this is all causing the exact opposite, it causes separation. Because when we belong to a certain Union, be it the USA or the European Union, or even worse to aggressive structures built out of fear like NATO or the Warsaw Pact, we don't belong to other opposing unions, we don't belong to the rest of the world anymore. Divisions are created, and these lead to conflicts and wars. And the larger the so called

“unifying” structure is, the larger the conflicts and wars are going to be. There is no need to belong to anything conceptual. For we already belong to the most intimate of Unions, the Union of All.



All is One – Debbie Parkins, © 2022

Oneness, Wholeness, Nature. We are all not separate parts, but intimate features of this Union. We belong to this Union with our very nature. All little clubs and societies we might think or wish to belong to with our minds, are not causing progress, but decline, deterioration, retrogression. It plunges us into abstract little conflicts and grand terrible wars, and in return we only get an artificial small feeling of belonging, which is actually separation. We should all stay independent, for we are already fully connected to the Whole as we are by nature. Nothing more is needed, nothing more is even possible. Ukraine should be proud of its independence, should not even want to belong to either NATO or the Warsaw Pact. It is only out of fear that these artificial needs arise. It should not even want to be called Ukraine. The word “Ukraine” perhaps refers to the old Slavic word for “Borderland”, as does the word “Krajina”. Well, what’s in a name? This denotes separation already. Perhaps they should think of another word, denoting “no borders”. And Russia and all other nations of the world should not want to call themselves anything separate either, nor should they organize in blocks of power, language, currency, religion, race, or culture. After all, these so called separate nations are floating in the same Ocean. Nature is innately diverse already in its appearances, and we should rejoice in those apparent differences. And know intuitively that this is only what appears on the surface, but underneath and very intimate to this, we are all Brothers and Sisters, fellow human beings, fellow features of aliveness,

fellow manifestations of Divinity. If we can't eat, don't we all starve? If we can't breathe, don't we all choke? If we get hurt, don't we all cry and bleed? And isn't this true for all creatures alike, humans, animals, plants? What else can we inspire for that is more meaningful? Nothing, this is the *summum* already. *Vanitas vanitatum, omnia Vanitas*.

Let me paraphrase *William Shakespeare* again:

"What's is a name? That which we call a Being by any other name would be as Devine".

It is tempting to judge what is happening in Ukraine, and to point fingers to one side or the other, but this would be much too easy. The truth is, we don't know what to say. It is a disaster happening, that is for sure, and with disasters there are always myriad causes. To only look at the most recent causes (the last two weeks, two years, two decades even) and then conclude this person or party is bad or good, is not the way to go. If we look at the history of mankind, even if we only look at the region that this disaster concerns, so much has happened in the centuries and millennia before between states and armies and countries and people, that it is almost incomprehensible. No one can tell the complete story, and reading about it is not going to help either, because we simply did not live it. We did not realize it. To say anything truthful about it is simply impossible. The mind cannot comprehend this, it is too complex. Too much has happened. And as always, everything is crucial to what follows. We can trace this conflict back as far as we want, to end up with Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel. And none of us is really at fault, or more at fault than any of the other involved parties. We are all at fault of failing to stop the separations of the mind.

Recently, Debbie talked with a friend of ours who lives in our little hamlet as well. Her parents live in Ukraine and she is understandably very worried about the situation. Debbie's words:

*"I hope a miracle will happen and that all people of the world stop fighting and become wise beings who take care of all life and the whole environment. That's very difficult and we will need a lot of awareness, presence, strength, courage and calmness to make sane and caring decisions for all of life. Just a little miracle I ask for. Let mankind become kindman again, as Papaji already said." ****

I couldn't agree more.

J.Paul Jordaans, Grathem
7 March 2022
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* J.Paul Jordaans, *Ode an die Freude*, my [previous Tale](#) about the situation in Ukraine.

** Seng-Ts'an, Third Zen Patriarch, *Hsin Hsin Ming*, Verses on the Faith-Mind, translated from the Chinese by Richard B. Clarke, White Pine Press, Buffalo, New York, 2001.

*** H.W.L. Poonja (1910-1997), the great Indian sage and spiritual teacher, also known as Papaji.