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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION



The Atomic Bomb

Advancements in research and technology have reached a level of complexity that requires the implementation of a robust social engineering program in order to prepare the human species to recognize and accept their responsibilities when dealing with novel dual-use innovations. Merely paying lip service to noble aspirations, such as, for example, the Kantian notion of treating humans as an end-in-itself, cannot suffice at a time when the population masses continue to be seen as means to an end, whether it be with regard to accumulating financial wealth, social- or political power, or to indulge in pleasure. One might call it the enduring human condition.

Hence, no real advancements can be noticed in human moral development. The weapons industry continues to set the stage for so-called red lines not to be crossed and for compliance with negotiated agreements, or lack thereof. Still today, as at times before, complicity among presumed rational actors enables the extinction or maiming of untold numbers of human lives, as the current example in Eastern Europe demonstrates. The warring parties use this occasion of armed conflict to test their newly acquired weapons and to discard outdated stockpiles. The atomic bomb was seen as the weapon of choice to prevent future wars. It failed to do so. Rather, even more weapons with sophisticated lethality have been developed since and are now being tested in live combat.

The six papers in this issue of *Existenz* approach the atomic bomb topic from three viewpoints. Stephen Leach (Keele University, UK) and Francis Seeburger (University of Denver, emeritus) use a philosophical lens. Leach contrasts the positions of Bertrand Russell and Karl Jaspers and arrives at a surprising conclusion. Seeburger elaborates similarities and differences regarding Jaspers' and Martin Heidegger's views on the atomic bomb.

Current political and military realities regarding the atomic bomb are being discussed by Francis Cheneval (University of Zurich, CH) and Tom Sauer (University of Antwerpen, BE). Cheneval argues in favor of developing a supranational authority that regulates atomic weapons with binding force, while Sauer explores the feasibility of deploying tactical nuclear weapons.

The papers by Jessica Ludescher Imanaka (Seattle University) and Sarah McMillen (Duquesne University) speak to the human condition. Imanaka's focus is the Hiroshima peace movement, where she supports her position by referring to Giorgio Agamben. McMillen argues from an existential position and contrasts it with examples taken from Stanley Kubrick's movie *Dr. Strangelove*.

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Editor-in-Chief

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