Introduction

In the summer of 1932, Albert Einstein wrote Sigmund Freud a famous letter, asking what it would take for humans to stop fighting each other, whether "there [was] any way of delivering mankind from the menace of war." As far as the famous physicist was concerned, the fact that wars continued unabated in spite of widespread recognition of their horror meant that the issue was, at bottom, psychological: "Man has within him a lust for hatred and destruction. In normal times this passion exists in a latent state, it emerges only in unusual circumstances; but it is a comparatively easy task to call it into play and raise it to the power of a collective psychosis." And so, the question of controlling war is really about what is possible psychologically: "Is it possible to control man's mental evolution so as to make him proof against the psychosis of hate and destructiveness?"

In his response, Freud agreed that war is made possible, in part, by the existence of destructive instincts that comingle with our other, more "erotic" ones. But our responsiveness to war is not just a question of instincts. It also turns on our preoccupation with ideas, and it is determined by the importance we attach to material interests. War has psychological, philosophical, and economical roots; it is multi-determined: "[W]hen a nation is summoned to engage in war, a whole gamut of human motives may respond to this appeal–high and low motives ... The lust for aggression and destruction is certainly included ... The stimulation of these destructive impulses by appeals to idealism and the erotic instinct naturally facilitate their release."

The force and persistence of the destructive instinct will not allow for the abolishment of war, Freud wrote. The challenge is not eliminating war but channeling our aggressive tendencies, themselves irreducible, towards less deadly outputs – a process Freud elsewhere calls "sublimation." On a slightly more optimistic note, Freud adds that we may try to strengthen ties of identification between human beings, and we may even try to socially engineer a class of intellectual leaders less susceptible to fighting.

("[A] superior class of independent thinkers, unamenable to intimidation and fervent in the quest of truth, whose role it would be to question the ways in which war is urged upon the public.") And yet, these are both very long-term projects. So long-term, they "conjure up an ugly picture of mills that grind so slowly that, before the flour is ready, men are dead of hunger."[1]

Freud was always ambivalent about Einstein. It didn't help that a few years earlier the physicist refused to recommend him for the Nobel Prize. Einstein wasn't convinced about the value of psychoanalysis: "[N]otwithstanding my admiration for the ingenious achievements of Freud, I hesitate to intervene in this case. I couldn't convince myself of the validity of Freud's theory and I am therefore unable to form an authoritative judgment for others."[2] The great psychologist, for his part, didn't think much of the younger man's psychological acumen: "[Einstein] is cheerful, confident and kind, understands as much about psychology as I do about physics, and so we had a very good conversation,"[3] he reported to a student about their first meeting in 1927. And it is indeed easy to dismiss Einstein's initial question as the earnest, naïve musing of a scientist whose grasp on history and political psychology is tenuous. But Einstein's query does, in fact, raise the most beguiling question of political philosophy: Why do people fight? Why is organized conflict one of the most constant forces – across eras and cultures – in human history? If war is so bad, why do we keep going to war?

This book attempts a partial answer. Freud is of course right that war is multi-determined. In these pages, I will focus on the moral feelings that fuel fighting. In particular, I will explore the role that political humiliation and the thirst for glory play in the run-up to and maintenance of conflict. The book offers a philosophical account of these feelings and the relationship between them, as well as a discussion of real-world cases in which they propel and animate war. Consider the following examples, a few of which I take up in detail in these pages:

On June 21st 1940, a week after the Nazis marched into Paris, Hitler ordered the "Compiègne Wagon," the train car in which the Germans signed the 1918 armistice, removed from the French museum in which it was kept. The wagon was taken back to the exact spot in which the defeated Germans signed the

[1] The entire correspondence is available here: www.public.asu.edu/~jmlynch/273/documents/FreudEinstein.pdf.

[2] www.haaretz.com/life/books/2017-05-25/ty-article-magazine/.premium/when-freud-and-einstein-tried-to-answer-an-age-old-question-why-war/0000017f-f755-d044-adff-f7fda5230000#:~:text=I%20couldn%27t%20convince%20myself,an%20authoritative%20judgment%20for%20others.

[3] Ibid.

agreement that ended the Great War. Hitler then marched a French delegation into the train car and dictated his terms for accepting their surrender. With exacting symmetry, the German humiliation in World War I was reversed.[4]

Writing in the July 2014 issue of Dabiq, the Islamic State's promotional magazine, the group's spokesperson, Abu Mohammed Al Adnani, declared: "The time has come for those generations that were drowning in oceans of disgrace, being nursed on the milk of humiliation, and being ruled by the vilest of all people, after their long slumber in the darkness of neglect—the time has come for them to rise. The time has come for the ummah of Muhammad . . . to wake up from its sleep, remove the garments of dishonor, and shake off the dust of humiliation and disgrace, for the era of lamenting and moaning has gone, and the dawn of honor has emerged anew."[5]

In an undated letter from an American federal prison, documented by the Anti-Defamation League, Jimmy Matchette, a member of the Hammerskin neo-Nazi gang, wrote to his colleagues that "Being a Hammerskin is the distinct feeling of being set apart from the entire planet. And of knowing we will conquer & overcome all obstacles to achieve our goals and accomplish our great work, knowing that if we fail, all is lost forever and the west will perish. Even though I am locked down in a maximum-security federal penitentiary, I wouldn't [have] traded the opportunity for all the gold in the world. You, my true comrades, hold all the glory of victory at your fingertips. We really are the most notorious white power Skinhead group in the entire World."[6]

A few weeks after the end of the 1967 war, Shmuel Gonen (also known as Gorodish), then commander of the IDF's 7th armored brigade, gave a speech to mark his group's victory in the battles for control of the Sinai Peninsula: "[E]verywhere we passed through we left behind burnt skeletons, destroyed tanks, and charred bodies," he told his soldiers. "We looked straight at death, and death lowered its eyes . . . My warrior comrades! You did not know the majesty of your own courage, and when I saw the armored vehicles burning and pierced and the people- you- fighting on from within, I came to know that man was steel and the armor mere metal . . . in this war victory is all yours. Be strong and brave, my brothers, heroes of glory!"[7]

[4] www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-battle-of-france.

[5] Full copies of the magazine have been removed from the Internet since conducting the research for this book. But the quote is available here: https://eaworldview.com/2014/06/iraq-text-isis-declaration-caliphate-muslims/.

[6] www.adl.org/education/resources/profiles/hammerskin-nation.

[7] http://yadlashiryon.gal-ed.co.il/Info/hi_show.aspx?id=51236&t=3 (my translation from Hebrew).

Writing in his 1977 autobiography *In Search of Identity*, Egyptian President Anwar el Sadat explained the rationale for his country's surprise attack against Israel in 1973: "[T]he basic task was to wipe out the disgrace and humiliation that followed from the 1967 defeat. I reckoned it would be 1000 times more honorable for us . . . to be buried crossing the [Suez] Canal than to accept disgrace and humiliation."[8]

From Hitler's determination to erase Germany's disgrace in Versailles to Sadat's promise to undo Egypt's humiliation in 1967 to ISIS's proclamations that it would end the "emasculation" of the *ummah* and restore the glory of the Caliphate, a sense of political humiliation and a desire for martial glory have always been central in the drive to war. But though glory and humiliation are in many ways the two-stroke engine of conflict, and though, taken together, they spur individuals and nations to violence, contemporary political philosophers have shown little interest in these dispositions. There have been few philosophical works on political humiliation and how it drives belligerence, and even fewer on the meaning of glory. In fact, with one notable exception, the last time political philosophy took glory seriously was when Hobbes wrote about it in the *Leviathan*.

In this book, I offer a philosophical account of political humiliation, martial glory, and the relationship between them. I argue that it is impossible to understand why people are drawn to war and how wars are justified without making sense of these two political passions and the ways in which they inflame each other. In Part I, I offer a philosophical account of martial glory. I argue that glory still matters, even in the age of asymmetrical war and drone strikes, and that part of our ambivalence about the term comes from a failure to distinguish between personal and political glory. In Part II, I suggest that political humiliation is more than the flip side of recognition and that it often consists in the sense of lost status and anxieties about replacement. I describe how the sense of humiliation travels across time and space (making us feel humiliated because of events that happened long ago or because of what befell people we had never met), and then I develop a theory of humiliation in foreign policy. In Part III, I explore how political humiliation and martial glory combine in the lead-up to war and take up three case studies.

More specifically, Chapter 1 offers a philosophical history of glory beginning with Homer and Thucydides, through the works of Cicero, Machiavelli, and Hobbes, and concluding with a discussion of the meaning of the term for Hannah Arendt. Chapter 2 draws on these historical

[8] Anwar Sadat, *In Search of Identity: An Autobiography* (New York: HarperCollins, 1978): p. 215.

materials to construct a theory of glory that distinguishes between personal and political glory, examines the relationship between glory and honor, considers the scope of the concept (what kind of achievements can be deemed glorious?), and investigates its relationship to luck and the passage of time. The theory also distinguishes between glory as a motivation for acting and the bestowal of glory as an ex post facto act of social recognition. The chapter then goes on to discuss the gap between promises of glory and who actually gets glorified, the relationship between glory and death, and some normative questions including the relationship between glory and duty and the degree to which the bestowal of glory follows the precepts of just war theory. Chapter 3 tries to explain the modern ambivalence about glory. It goes through a series of "arguments" against glory, including the historical claim that the culture of honor breeds violence and should, therefore, be replaced by an emphasis on moneymaking, the argument that emerged after World War I that glory no longer makes sense in the wake of mechanized warfare, the incompatibility of glory with the practices of combatants in asymmetrical wars, the incompatibility of glory and the rise of technologies facilitating killing at a distance, and the comparative significance of glory and camaraderie for the soldiers who actually fight wars. At the end of the chapter, I suggest that much of the modern skepticism about martial glory is a result of a tendency to run together two distinct understandings of the term – namely personal glory (of the kind that Achilles sought in the *Iliad*) and political glory (of the kind that Pericles promised in his funeral oration).

Chapter 4 begins to sketch a theory of political humiliation by examining Avishai Margalit's recognition-based theory of humiliation. I argue that this theory, while important, does not consider the possibility that there is more to humiliation than the denial of recognition and that it also fails to take seriously key aspects of the phenomenology of humiliation, such as the fact that it can be contagious and, more importantly, the sense of being replaced that lies at the heart of feeling humiliated. The chapter concludes by drawing clear distinctions between humiliation, shame, and embarrassment, and by considering the impact of technology on the role humiliation plays in our lives. Chapter 5 develops this theory of political humiliation further by offering a philosophical account of humiliation in international relations. A humiliating foreign policy involves acting vis-a-vis others simply because one can count on their inability to respond, disregarding the national heritage or history of other nations, dismissing and ignoring the complex social and cultural realities making up the lives of those we come into contact with, failing to take another group seriously as a subject

of promises, and viewing another political entity primarily as a source of resources. I explain the relationship between these elements and provide historical examples that illustrate how they play out in the real world. The chapter also develops further the argument made in Chapter 4, that the sense of being replaced is central to political humiliation, and suggests several reasons why it is important to understand the role of replacement in contemporary politics. The chapter continues with a consideration of the special role of humiliation in autocratic regimes and concludes with a discussion of the dual role of humiliation in international affairs – as both a spurn to war and a method of fighting. Chapter 6 argues that the need to avoid humiliation is already present in key areas of political theory. In particular, it informs precepts of *jus in bello* requirements in just war theory, serves as a rationale justifying various transitional justice policies, and helps make sense of our thinking about appeasement. Chapter 7 considers the relationship between glory and humiliation. It argues that glory is most often bestowed for ending a history of political humiliation and that humiliation is often understood in terms of lost glory. In this chapter, I also argue that there is a lopsidedness in the social distribution of humiliation and glory. While women (and children and the elderly) are the primary recipients of wars' humiliations, men tend to enjoy most of the glory. Finally, Chapter 8 offers three case studies for illustrating the theory advanced in this book: the 1973 Middle East war, the rise of ISIS, and Russia's revanchist foreign policy in the last fifteen years.

As I write this Introduction, the Kremlin's war of aggression in Ukraine, justified by claims of Russia's historical humiliation after the collapse of the Soviet Union, is well into its second year. Henry Kissinger, celebrating his 100th birthday, continues to vigorously advocate a "great powers" view of international relations, in which the interests of smaller nations are dismissed, even though this tendency to humiliate minor actors has sparked wars from the Peloponnesus to the "Levant" and the Balkans over the centuries. In much of the developed world, a postindustrial malaise has resulted in widespread feelings of hopelessness and humiliation that have fueled a frightening rise of right-wing populism, a trend that threatens democratic institutions. And these humiliations – real and manufactured – are always attended by promises of great honor and glory for anyone fighting to undo them. While philosophers have been looking elsewhere, the combustible mix of glory and humiliation continues to shape the political world. This book aims to bring political philosophy up to speed in this crucial area.