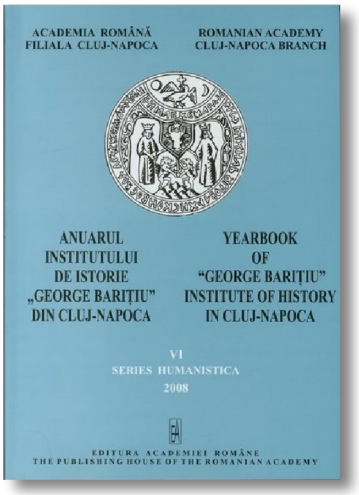

ISSN 1584-4404

Yearbook of the George Barițiu History Institute of Cluj-Napoca Series *Humanistica*

humanistica.ro

Tolerance in the Age of Pluralism

Herzl Baruch

How to cite this article:
Baruch, Herzl (2008) *Tolerance in the Age of Pluralism*, Yearbook of the George Barițiu History Institute of Cluj-Napoca, Series Humanistica, Vol. 6, pp. 299–312. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22965777

© 2008: The Publishing House of the Romanian Academy.
Humanistica Yearbook is published online since 2003.
Submit your article to Humanistica Yearbook: secretariat.dcsu@acad-cj.ro

TOLERANCE IN THE AGE OF PLURALISM

Herzl Baruch

Beit Berl College, Israel

Abstract: *Whereas in the past, tolerance was a major principle of liberalism, today it is becoming minor and liberalism is relying more than before on pluralism. In recent literature there is a growing suspicious of tolerance. It is claimed to be elusive, difficult to sustain and almost an impossible virtue. Can we therefore rightly suggest that pluralism makes tolerance unnecessary? I suggest that pluralism makes tolerance unnecessary only in the classic sense of tolerance, which has emerged in a monist system that assumes evident values on behalf of the tolerator and politically a publicly silenced tolerated. However in a normatively pluralist society a vital sense of tolerance, which I would term "reciprocal tolerance", is emerging. Some of the features of reciprocal tolerance are sketched by bearing on Popper's and Williams' accounts of tolerance and Gandhi's idea of non-violent resistance. I will try to show that within the limits of its minor role, tolerance is necessary in order to promote and sustain pluralism, both by protecting it of the intolerance of exclusion and the danger of irresponsible inclusion.*

1. THE PROBLEM OF TOLERANCE IN A PLURALIST SOCIETY

While tolerance played a major role in the classical liberal society, by challenging absolutism and religious wars, in our modern liberal society it plays a minor role. "Classical liberalism", says Heyd (1996, p. 4), "such as Locke's and Mill's, rested on the principle of tolerance more than does today's form of liberalism, which is closer to skeptical pluralism." The scope of tolerance has narrowed and it seems that pluralism is replacing tolerance. If tolerance has emerged in systems of beliefs and ways of life that were assumed to rely on evident values, pluralism didn't. In this respect the concept of tolerance as we knew it until some decades ago has been part of a monist society. What I mean by monist society is that only one set of beliefs and way of life has been established publicly as true and good. One may also describe such society as mono-cultural society, provided that it is understood in the normative and not in the descriptive sense. In the descriptive sense there may be in a society, and in many cases there actually are, more than one way of life. But it is in the normative sense that in a monist

An. Inst. de Ist. „G. Barițiu" din Cluj-Napoca, Series Humanistica, tom. VI, 2008, p. 299–312

society one way of life will constitute the public sphere. In a more pluralist society the public sphere will be shared (or is already shared) by more than one way of life. Is it desirable in such context to abandon tolerance and adopt only pluralism? Or in short, does pluralism make tolerance unnecessary? I will claim that the answer to this question is no and that a new notion of reciprocal tolerance is emerging in a pluralist society. Moreover, such notion is necessary to sustain and examine the scope of pluralism, as pluralism without the help of tolerance will be soon restricted being unable to challenge intolerance.

2. **TOLERANCE AS A PARADOXICAL ATTITUDE**

Tolerance is a second order principle. It involves two first order principles that are in contradiction, disapproval and restraint. The question of tolerance arises when some belief or action is disapproved. As Williams (1999, p. 65) puts it, "(t)oleration, we may say, is required only for the intolerable." In a monist society it is usually the majority group that determines what is intolerable. The minority in such society, even if it has an opinion, has no public voice in such matter. And although both groups assume that their beliefs and way of life are relying on evident values it is only the majority group that determines publicly that other beliefs and ways of life are deviating and therefore are considered deeply unacceptable. Moreover, it has good reasons to interfere and do something to change them from without. And as it may involve with violence, war and the collapse of society, other values then are weighed, such as respect for humanity, freedom, value of life and social solidarity, which justify restraint. Tolerance is needed as an attitude or a virtue in order to restrain one's disapproval. It requires us to accept people's beliefs and actions that we strongly disapprove (Mendus, 1989, p. 18–19; Horton, 1996, p. 28). On one hand, we are strongly committed to our beliefs and actions and from this perspective we also judge other's beliefs and actions to be wrong. On the other hand, we restrain ourselves. As Scanlon (1996, p. 226) claims, "(t)olerance thus involves an attitude that is intermediate between wholehearted acceptance and unrestrained opposition. This intermediate status makes tolerance a puzzling attitude." In Heyd's (1996, p. 10) formulation, it is the contemporary narrow scope of tolerance that makes it an elusive virtue. Williams (1999, p. 65) understands the paradox of tolerance in this way: "It is necessary where different groups have conflicting beliefs – moral, political or religious – and realize that there is no alternative to their living together, that is to say, no alternative except armed conflict, which will not resolve their disagreements and will impose continuous suffering. These are circumstances in which toleration is necessary. Yet in those same circumstances it may well *seem* impossible (mine italics, H.B.)." The tolerant attitude can thus be understood both as a virtue in which disapproval and restraint are paradoxically combined together, thereby

creating a conflicting attitude difficult and even almost impossible to sustain. This internal conflict, according to Fletcher (1996, p. 158–9) presupposes a complexity of two sentiments, an impulse to intervene and regulate the lives of others and a moral or logical imperative to restrain that impulse. This is why to be tolerant involves suffering[1] and this element of suffering makes tolerance unstable. As Fletcher explains, "(t)olerance is unstable, because no one wishes either to tolerate when intervention is possible or to be tolerated when there is an option for something better." (*Ibidem*, p. 159)

The above analysis makes it clear that tolerance and indifference should not be confused (Weale, 1985, p. 18). Tolerance isn't an attitude that involves indifference, as we tolerate just because we care about what others wrongly believe and do. We care because we are committed to our beliefs which we deeply think are true and to our actions which we are convinced to be good. While the tolerant attitude tries to maneuver between the conflicting demands of disapproval and restrain, indifference doesn't involve a conflict. When there is indifference there is no disapproval in the first place and therefore no need for restrain. The indifferent attitude doesn't perceive other's beliefs and action to be of any concern of his, at least not as an urgent question. Contrary to the indifferent attitude the tolerant attitude begins with our concern that the other's views and way of life are wrong. The tolerator is morally called to restrain himself bearing on his concern. But as Creppell (2003, p. 4) explains there is a third necessary condition to add to disapproval and restraint: "We do not call an act toleration if disapproval and restraint are followed by a total retraction of contact, or by ignoring or making the other invisible. The restraint is only meaningful because the parties remain in the presence of one another in a nontrivial way. Toleration essentially implies a continued relationship of some significant level of accommodation." So, while the person holding an indifferent attitude can do without continued relationship with the other, the tolerator cannot. The tolerant attitude implies, therefore, a demand to hold both conflict (disapproval/restraint) and mutuality, while indifference dissolves conflict and involves either retraction of contact or relaxed mutuality.

As a moral principle tolerance requires that the tolerator will be in some way inconsistent with the implications of what he/she believes to be right, i.e. to intervene or even force the other change his/her way of life. From this point of view the tolerator doesn't only have good reasons to disapprove other's beliefs and way of life but even to intervene with them. Moreover, the tolerator has the power to do so (Nicholson, 1985, p. 160–161). I think that these two points should be

[1] Fletcher also emphasizes that the element of suffering in tolerance is evident in some languages. There is a close connection between "patience" and "tolerance" in Hebrew (*Savlanut* and Sovlanut), in German (*Geduld* and *Geduldsamkeit*), in Russian (*terpenie* and *terpimoct*) and presumably in numerous other languages (1996, 159). I wish to add to this that to be tolerated also involves suffering and that in a pluralist society or condition also the tolerated in one matter might become tolerator in another.

clarified in a particular context. It is in the context of a monist system that assume evident values that the tolerator is sure to have almost perfectly good reasons to disapprove the tolerated beliefs and actions and to be justified to intervene with them. If the tolerator doesn't assume evident values then he/she will not have almost perfectly good reasons to intervene. Even if one believes that his or her values are based on good reasons one might have doubts whether intervention can be justified. And as for the second point, only when the relations between majority (and the power of the state too, for this matter) and minority are clear and stable that it is right to say that the powerful tolerator has both the reasons and the power to intervene. In a more normatively pluralist society, in which there isn't any stable relationship between majority and minority groups and there are dynamic changes between them, the first doesn't have the power to intervene in the way of life of the second. This might lead to new formulations of the problem of tolerance, like the danger of disappearance of tolerance by intolerant who are tolerated, as the Nazi case proves (Popper's problem of tolerance), or to the extension of tolerance to the agency of a minority or a less powerful groups (Ghandi's and Luther King's approaches).

However there is a price to be paid when tolerance is at stake in a monist society. The tolerator doesn't respect the tolerated beliefs and way of life although he/she might be able to respect the tolerated as an idealized human being. The tolerator then is in an unsolvable situation: unable to listen to the tolerated and unable to intervene either. The tolerated also pays a heavy price especially in a monist society as he/she can practice their beliefs and way of life only in the private domain. In the public domain the tolerated voice is silenced. Any effort of the tolerated to participate in the public sphere might be reacted with intolerance and might undermine the already unstable and difficult balance between both groups. While in an absolutist monist society both the tolerator and the tolerated are satisfied in avoiding intolerance and violence, in a pluralist society such avoidance although necessary isn't satisfactory. It will demand that the other will be respected in his/her concrete condition and not only as an ideal human being, listened to and may be even learned from. Moreover, the slow shift from a monist society to a pluralist one will be involved with more opportunity for the tolerated to participate in the public sphere. Such change cannot be explained by a dichotomist account, as a dichotomist account is usually presented in order to exclude the undesired. It is to be claimed that the reasonable restriction of tolerance as a minor principle doesn't exclude it of being still important principle in a normatively pluralist context.

3. **TOLERANCE AND HIDDEN PLURALISM**

The germ of the problem of tolerance in a pluralist society can be traced to the past where the same group was in one country the majority and in a neighboring country the minority. For example, the protestant tolerator in the 17th

century in Europe while being confident that his/her own beliefs were based on evident assumptions and that the tolerated catholic beliefs were wrong, knew (or at least, could have known) that the catholic tolerator in a neighboring country was also sure that his beliefs were based on evident assumptions and that the tolerated protestant were wrong. Could the same system be assumed to rely on evident values only in those societies in which it constitutes the majority group, but not the minority group? No, logically it couldn't. But actually in practice it was. However when society was only beginning to release itself from absolutism such question wasn't the most urgent one. And no doubt that tolerance therefore had a major role in the long and winding road to a more pluralist and democratic society.

It is probably true that the more tolerant a society becomes it also becomes more pluralist and that the denial of pluralism is explicitly connected with the flourishing of intolerance (Mendus, 1989, p. 12–14). Thus if the European society was during the non-enlightened absolutist era a monist society permitting only one official way of life, in most cases one religion, tolerance allowed it to sustain two or more ways of life. However in the more monist condition the concept of tolerance has a close connection with the above usual usage. In a more pluralist society, especially one in which the pluralist attitude plays a major role, the usual usage of tolerance isn't satisfactory. It may give a rise to enhance a kind of tolerance that will keep pluralism hidden for wrong reasons. Herman (1996) gives one such example, like letting the minority express its grievances without really listening to her, in which under the disguise of tolerance mutuality can be more limited than necessary in a more pluralist society. Hidden pluralism might also be enhanced for wrong reasons by justifying tolerance as an appeal to autonomy also for those who do not perceive it as a value, like socialists and collectivist or religious communities (Mendus, 1989; Halbertal, 1996). In this respect then the usual conception of tolerance still refers to a monist society and monism. Thus understanding the usual notion of tolerance in a less pluralist society should precede the understanding of tolerance in a more pluralist society. And where the pluralist attitude plays a major role a new notion of tolerance is probably emerging.

One way to examine the emergence of a new notion of tolerance in the shift between absolutism and pluralism is to inquire the relations between majority and minority when the proportions between them are reversed. Williams (1999, p. 66) asks the question and suggests that the direction of tolerance in its usual usage changes from the prior more powerful group to the current more powerful group. For example, in a society where Christians are the majority group and Muslims are the minority the first group is called to be tolerant. When the proportion between the groups is changing and the Muslims become to be the majority they would be expected to be the tolerant. Thus, in the usual usage of tolerance the less powerful group isn't called to be tolerant. How is the concept of tolerance to be explained and then applied *in* the process of change in proportion between the groups and subsequently changes in human relations between two and more ways of life? It

would be, for example, undesirable if before the change in the direction of tolerance is established that there would be no demands from the growing minority group to support tolerance in order to be ready to adopt tolerance when it becomes a majority. Moreover, in a more pluralist society the dichotomist division between majority and minority can be dissolved and there might be more than one direction of tolerance. The tolerated in one set of problems might be a tolerator in another. For example, Albanians in Kosovo may be demanded to tolerate the minority Serbians in Kosovo, but also the minority of Serbians in Kosovo together with the majority of Serbians in Serbia may be demanded to tolerate the majority of Albanians autonomy or independence in Kosovo. The majority of Serbians in Serbia will also be demanded to tolerate the minority of Albanians in Serbia. This is one example for the need to extend the notion of tolerance over the usual usage of majority-minority relationship which presumes only one direction of tolerance. Williams gives a hint for such understanding of the concept when he says that "more basically, toleration is a matter of the attitudes of any group to another, and does not concern only the relations of the more powerful to the less powerful." (*Ibidem*) And in this sense the problem of tolerance is first to be found at the level of human relations and the attitudes of one way of life towards the other, not only a matter of what laws in the state there should be (*ibidem*). Such understanding of tolerance, I suggest, would presume more than one direction of tolerance although their scope and intensity might be different in each direction. For example, in a liberal society one direction of tolerance will be from the state or the majority towards the Muslim minority concerning the way Muslim women dress in public institutions and a second direction of tolerance will be from the Muslims minority concerning the freedom of speech in religious matters, including critics of the Islam. I suggest that such extended and more reciprocal notion of tolerance becomes urgent in a more normatively pluralist society as many contemporary societies are.

4. ON (NOT) TOLERATING THE INTOLERANT – A MAJORITY PERSPECTIVE

Another way to inquire the problem of tolerance in a more liberal and pluralist society is to acknowledge the problem of an intolerant minority which might become a majority. The danger is that a tolerant majority will be too weak to protect its values and the very existence of a tolerant society, if the tolerated is intolerant. This is the *paradox of tolerance* according to Popper, which he was probably one of the first to acknowledge in his monumental book *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (OSE)[2]. How is it possible? Popper's first answer was that:

[2] I will address it as Popper's *problem* of tolerance since paradox is intrinsic to the concept of tolerance as explained above.

> *"Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.* (1945, p. 265)

Popper's question and solution takes as a paradigm case the feeble 'tolerance' toward the Nazi's violent intolerance. Those democrats who were too much 'tolerant' to the Nazis may have believed in sovereignty, democracy and capitalism. The Nazis have abolished democracy, violated sovereignty in the case of Czechoslovakia thereby violating the Munich Agreement, and they have pursued a state capitalism with a supervised private ownership. No doubt that this is a case of a tolerant society unable to defend itself against the violence of the intolerant who is tolerated and who is actively intolerant. The problem is real, I believe. But bearing on the concept of tolerance and its components does this case exemplify an *unlimited* tolerance? I think that it doesn't. Rather it is a case of unlimited restraint or unreasoned restraint together with confused beliefs towards the Nazis, thereby weakening disapproval or even having no disapproval at all. The question can be generalized: Is there such a thing as 'unlimited tolerance'? I think there isn't and it seems that what Popper really meant was unlimited restraint that also might lead to indifference based on wrong reasons[3]. In such case indifference might endanger one's tolerant society and with it the principle of tolerance, not because it is an unlimited tolerance, but an unlimited restraint that makes disapproval unnecessary. And when disapproval is unnecessary tolerance becomes impossible.

Unlike former liberal philosophers, from Locke to Mill, who sought to extend and empower the component of restraint in order to establish tolerance, Popper, I conjecture, was concerned with too easy and unlimited restraint that endangers its existence. However in both cases it isn't a question of unlimited tolerance. Popper's mistaken answer or theory of tolerance in the OSE doesn't make the problem that he asked less important and urgent. On the contrary, it is today no less urgent. Did Popper try to give a better solution to the problem of tolerance? I think he did in his book *In Search of a better world* (1994), which includes lectures and essays from thirty years. In this book he seems to amend his theory and instead of "unlimited tolerance" he proposes that the problem of tolerance is explained as "a lax form of tolerance" (1994, p. 191). I will explain why I see this as a better answer to the problem. Bearing on the above account of what tolerance is I suggest that a lax form of tolerance is one in which either the conflict between disapproval and restraint or the component of mutuality aren't sustained. The urgent and explicit problem that Popper emphasizes is, I suggest, the exaggeration of restraint.

[3] Indifference can also be based on right reasons. An example: when someone is indifferent to the fact that his neighbor goes to a catholic church, to a protestant church, to a synagogue or to a mosque or doesn't practice any religion at all, his indifferent attitude may have a moral value too, given that the rights of all citizens to practice and to avoid practicing any religion are respected. In this respect indifference is accountable as a sign of a morally proper situation.

This is what happened in the Nazi case and probably can happen in any "too" liberal, and I may add pluralist, society as Popper was anxious of also in his late period, as he expresses it, for example, in his latest lectures in his book *All Life is Problem Solving* (Popper, 1999, p. x–xi and 110–111). If restraint is exaggerated then the necessary conflict with disapproval in any concept of tolerance dissolves. And the result is that tolerance doesn't emerge. Continuing Popper's line of thought I suggest that a lax form of tolerance also has to do with some confusion concerning the first component, that of disapproval or unacceptability, which Popper doesn't mention. For example, the misuse of tolerance in the Nazi case by some prominent western liberals is that the unlimited restraint toward them was accompanied with *too limited or to feeble disapproval*. May be it is a result of confused beliefs. And in general, when one of the components of tolerance is exaggerated or belittled then tolerance, with its intrinsic conflicting condition, becomes impossible. Moreover, not only the conflicting components are necessary in order to evade a lax form of tolerance, also the third one is, that of coexistence. What I mean is that a lax form of tolerance might also be the cause of giving up the component of mutuality, either by appealing to violence or by appealing to indifference. For Popper, it seems, the component of mutuality is that of reciprocal coexistence (Popper, 1945, p. 266). This feature in Popper's account is different from the traditional notion of tolerance in which coexistence isn't reciprocal, as it has to do with relations between a more powerful and a less powerful and the inclusion of the first in the public sphere together with exclusion of the second. So, I think we can conclude that a lax form of tolerance has nothing to do with unlimited tolerance but with unlimited restraint, and for that matter also with too weak disapproval, and finally with non-reciprocal mutuality. I therefore suggest that Popper's theory of tolerance would be interpreted as that of reciprocal tolerance and that his most distinguished new feature is that the tolerated too, not only the tolerator, has to be *committed* to tolerance. And it is implied that the tolerated cannot, or more precisely should not, be intolerant, or at least a vigorous and furious attacker of tolerance. Would we also extrapolate that Popper notion of reciprocal tolerance is that the tolerated committed to reciprocal tolerance is also in some way a tolerator? Such inference may be implied if a tolerant person is defined as one who has a tolerant philosophy. But as Popper assumes, when the tolerator is the majority determining the laws of state and the public opinion, it doesn't seem that he goes so far. A reader of Popper may suggest that it is reasonable, as I think, that reciprocal tolerance should imply that at least in some way the tolerated will also be a tolerator and vice versa.

What are the practical implications that Popper draws from his theory of tolerance? He proposed this maxim: "Tolerance towards all who are not intolerant and who do not propagate intolerance." (*Ibidem*, p. 235) And he further explains "that the moral decisions of others should be treated with respect, as long as such decisions do not conflict with the principle of tolerance." (*Ibidem*) If in the usual

usage of tolerance the tolerator disapproves beliefs and way of life of the tolerated, without demanding the tolerated to be committed in some way to tolerance, in Popper's usage such demand is necessarily included. One historical reason that the tolerated wasn't asked to be tolerant (i.e., committed to tolerance) was that in many cases both parties begin their challenge with tolerance as intolerant. It is reasonable to assume that after a period of intolerance and violence the appeal to the principle of tolerance is made by those who at the beginning of the process are still intolerant. Only after some tentative trials and error elimination do they begin to be tolerant. And since the tolerated in the past was excluded from the public sphere, the question whether they were tolerant wasn't at stake. Restricted to the private domain they probably couldn't propagate intolerance. And even if the question was acknowledged by some theorists it wasn't urgent. It is only in the 20th century when a strong version of pluralism and a more radical normative pluralist condition emerge that also the tolerated is capable of being an agent in the public domain and therefore they are also demanded to be tolerant. What I think Popper has acknowledged was that if in a more open and dynamic society the tolerated can participate in the public domain and potentially can become more powerful then they have to be committed in some way to tolerance. Otherwise when the tolerated is more powerful intolerance can be spread. In this respect Popper's maxim is reasonable.

But there are also problems with Popper's practical maxim. I will focus on two major problems. First, if Popper had in mind, as he seems to imply, that a tolerant person should tolerate only other tolerant persons, then tolerance might not be needed in the first place. The implied formula tolerant-tolerance-tolerant, is like saying that a good person should treat well only other good persons. It is almost a tautological ethics. Can we reasonably draw from the negative maxim "do not tolerate the intolerant" the positive maxim "tolerate only the tolerant"? As mentioned before, bearing on the origins of tolerance after any period of war and intolerance it should be emphasized that being tolerant is a long process to follow in order to become tolerant and that one doesn't become to be tolerant right from the start. There is a process to follow in order to become tolerant and also then it isn't an encompassing tolerance and more important it isn't a relatively stable virtue or attitude. Second, tolerance is called for, as Williams explains (see p. 502 above), when there is something intolerable. In this respect the formula tolerant-tolerance-tolerant is conceptually impossible and the question is how "something intolerable" should be included in any formula based on Popper's theory. What I mean is that Popper's maxim "do not tolerate the intolerant" should be settled with the necessary condition that tolerance is called for to challenge the intolerable. The maxim then should rather be, not unconditionally of course, "tolerate the intolerable". Popper's maxim should then be restricted if it is to be feasible. This is how Popper in the OSE tries to restrict his maxim. He says:

> *"I do not imply, for instance, that we should always suppress the utterance of intolerant philosophies; as long as we can counter them by rational argument and keep them in check by public opinion, suppression would certainly be most unwise. But we should*

> *claim the right to suppress them if necessary even by force; for it may easily turn out that they are not prepared to meet us on the level of rational argument, but begin by denouncing all argument; they may forbid their followers to listen to rational arguments, because it is deceptive, and teach them to answer arguments by the use of their fists or pistols. We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant. We should claim that any movement preaching intolerance places itself outside the law, and we should consider incitement to intolerance and persecution as criminal, in the way as we should consider incitement to murder, or to kidnapping, or to the revival of the slave trade, as criminal."* (Popper, 1945, p. 265)

If they aren't denouncing argument and they don't appeal to force they should be tolerated. But there seem to be some difficulties in this explanation. I will mention three: First, since those who are to be tolerated "should meet us on the level of rational argument", the problem is to discern those who meet us on the level of rational argument from those who do not. It isn't an easy task as the most dangerous enemies of open society appealed to rationality and at the same time had intolerant philosophy, Plato and Hegel for example. May be what Popper has in mind is an 'unacceptable' and intolerant philosophy, like that of the historicist? Can it be unacceptable but not intolerant? It is hard to say. Popper assumes that one already knows what rational argument is and that it can be demarcated. Second, what if the intolerant agrees to examine his/her way of life but on what he/she understands as rational grounds? Is his denial of methodological individualism, for example, in the scientific inquiry intolerable? Does Kuhn's theory of the irrationality of scientific progress meet us on the level of rational argument? Is an irrational philosophy of science an intolerant philosophy? However Kuhn's appeal to irrational account of science doesn't necessarily imply that he is denouncing rational argument or that he appeals to force. Moreover, there are some rational elements in his theory in one respect or another. Third, what if the intolerant is denouncing rational argument but doesn't propagate intolerance nor appeals to violence? For example, one who believes in the doctrine of the chosen people (a problem which Popper refers to; *ibidem*, p. 8–9 and 203) or a Christian doctrine (*ibidem*, p. 65–66) may refuse to argue about his/her philosophy, believing that it isn't at all a matte of rational argument, and at the same time adopts a clear tolerant philosophy. Would he/she be considered intolerant or tolerant? It is hard to say according to Popper. Forth, by not tolerating also a passive intolerant there is a danger that the tolerator too might become intolerant, sometimes even an active intolerant.

I suggest Popper is right that in an open and pluralist society being intolerant *is* an urgent problem. But he is mistaken if his formula is tolerant-tolerance-tolerant. Such formula doesn't allow one to tolerate the intolerable. It might too easily exclude the first component of tolerance: disapproval. And by excluding disapproval the conflicting condition of tolerance between disapproval and restraint cannot be established. In order to evade the meaninglessness of tolerating the tolerant we may have to tolerate the intolerant provided that he/she isn't active

intolerant. In this respect even if they are *passive* intolerant, in the sense of having an intolerant philosophy, but they don't try to force on others their beliefs and way of life they should be tolerated. What I suggest in this argument is that although Popper was right that the question of being tolerant is significant to any tolerant attitude, his maxim shouldn't exclude all the intolerant and should include some of the intolerant. Moreover one has to be cautious with the idea of 'intolerant philosophy' as it could exclude all that is intolerable. It may also exclude those intolerant (having intolerant philosophy) who are passive intolerant or having intolerant philosophy in one sense (like the theory of the chosen people) and who are nevertheless explicitly committed to tolerance. I don't think that Popper thought that they were threatening the principle of tolerance and tolerant society. Popper's maxim should be reformulated by restricting it to *active intolerant* which explicitly propagate intolerance and appeal to violence. However, those who are diagnosed as having intolerant philosophy and don't appeal to violence should be tolerated. As Nicholson (1987, p. 170) suggests, "by securing obnoxious and even intolerant opinion the tolerator upholds and reinforces his own values, demonstrating how highly he rates toleration and the morality it rests on." On the other hand, government intolerance can endanger morality more than the actions of an intolerant minority (*ibidem*). The distinction between active and passive intolerance although not a perfect one might help us to evade both mistakes: one, that of tolerating the dangerous intolerant who really threatens the principle of tolerance and tolerant society; second, that in order to appeal to tolerance there should always be something intolerable.

Finally, we can address again the question whether Popper also demands that the tolerated will be a tolerator too. As I understand his theory and maxim he seems to assume that tolerance is a matter of the state or the more powerful group (majority). The tolerated is only demanded by Popper to be somehow committed to tolerance in the sense of not being intolerant. The question whether the tolerated or the less powerful group (minority) can and should also be a tolerator is I think also urgent in contemporary pluralist condition. Otherwise, reciprocity wouldn't be fully possible. For such a problem, "how can the less powerful group be a tolerator?" I suggest that the paradigm cases would be that of Ghandi and King after him.

5. ON TOLERATING THE INTOLERANT – A MINORITY PERSPECTIVE

How can the minority, and not necessarily the majority be the initiator of tolerance? The paradigm example of Gandhi's *satyagraha,* I think can be helpful to elicit a reasonable positive answer. The idea of *satyagraha* includes two components which have to do with non-violent (but not passive!) mode of resistance: one, truth which equals love, and second, firmness or force (Gandhi,

1957, p. 318-319). And it also contains the idea that firmness to truth is not by inflicting suffering on the opponent but on oneself (see note 1, p. 2). Alas, the British colonialism in India during the first half of the 20th century was tolerant in many respects, particularly in religious matters, but wasn't tolerant, at least for three or four decades, to the Indians (nor any other natives in the colonies) efforts to achieve national independence, i.e. in political matters. It took the British some long years to become fully tolerant also to the Indians national liberation efforts. And when they became fully tolerant tolerance wasn't needed any more. Tolerance was needed then when Ghandhi and the participants in the Indian national liberation movement as *tolerators* had to confront the intolerant British rulers and more dramatically when the British were violent intolerant, i.e. using coercive power against the non-violent resistance of the Indians activists.

How is the Indian's non-violent struggle a matter of tolerance? To begin with they had to challenge the intolerable, the British rule in India, which they deeply disapproved. They had good reasons to disapprove the British rule and they even had *some* power to act against it. Moreover, they had good reasons to use force against the British. By choosing to restrain their struggle, in avoiding violence and implementing non-cooperative resistance, according to the *satyagraha*, the agents of the Indian liberation movement have created a conflicting moral attitude, a tolerant attitude. Thus they have inflicted suffering on themselves, as every tolerator does (*ibidem*, p. 469). Moreover, they also sustained mutuality with the British during the course of struggle, as the Gandhian practice of non-violence requires intense engagement with the opponent. In this respect, for example, "(i)t is only when a person has thus obeyed the laws of society scrupulously that he is in a position to judge as to which particular rules are good and just and which unjust and iniquitous (*ibidem*, p. 470). I think that Gandhi's case is one in which a less powerful group and the tolerated (in one context, the religious, for example) is also the tolerator (in another context, the political). If the British would have preferred to limit the scope of tolerance to religion, the Indians demanded to expand it to Politics. However, if Gandhi had to follow Popper's maxim he might determine that since the British were intolerant and were even violent in many cases then they shouldn't be tolerated.[4] But as we all know Gandhi didn't follow Popper's maxim (even if it is most probable that Popper thought about the state or the majority group to be tolerators not the minority). I think, however, that he did follow my

[4] Compare with the principle of "intolerance to intolerance" according to Fitzgerald (1999, 19–20) which shows that intolerance is difficult to eradicate at the level of differentiated communities sharing a small geographical space, while solidarity flourishes at the global level. Fitzgerald gives the example of the intolerance of the Catholics in Northern Ireland as a response to the intolerance of the Unionist and how this chain of intolerance is a function of fear and isolation. Fitzgerald's explanation I think can explain why tolerance between Indians and British was easier to practice than tolerance between Hindu's and Muslims. It might be interesting to examine his explanation to other contemporary regions where intolerance isn't easy to eradicate, Muslims and Greek orthodox in Cyprus, Israeli and Palestinians and Serbians and Albanians in Kosovo.

suggestion of a revised restricted maxim of Popper. What I mean is that if the British were violent intolerant, like Nazis or Japanese, Gandhi's appeal to tolerance won't be feasible at all. In such case as Gandhi believed it is better to appeal to violent means than to stay wickedly silent. But Gandhi's appeal to tolerance was feasible because the British although at the beginning were violent intolerant didn't, and may be couldn't, adopt violent intolerance for a long period. Moreover, there was a beginning of an international pluralism that fostered, I conjecture, Gandhi's notion of tolerant resistance. Of course, the British reasons for this may not be moral but prudential, but I don't think one should assume that the reasons for tolerance should only be moral and never political. Nevertheless, Gandhi did assume as Popper suggests that tolerance should be somehow reciprocal. To conclude, I suggest the understanding of Gandhi's tolerance as a paradigmatic example of tolerance initiated by the less powerful group towards the more powerful group. Such direction of tolerance is today even more urgent than before, as new modes of oppression and violence are posing threats to national and global society, both by the state and the more powerful groups as by the less powerful groups.

6. **CONCLUSIONS**

In this article I have tried to delineate some changes in the conception of tolerance in the shift from absolutism to pluralism. I have suggested that the three components of tolerance (disapproval, restraint and mutuality) are constituents of tolerance also in a pluralist society. But unlike the monist society some of the assumptions concerning tolerance do change. The first new assumption more emphasized in a normatively pluralist society is that tolerance is to be accounted at the level of human relations as a matter of attitudes of any group to another, not only the attitude of the more powerful group towards the less powerful group (Williams). In such way, I have suggested that in a pluralist society there is more than one direction of tolerance, sometimes even simultaneously, although not necessarily concerning the same matter and scope. This is due to the fact that the less powerful group participates in the public life of society in a more pluralist society. But this fact also makes it urgent that not only the tolerator belonging to the majority group would be demanded to pay some tribute to tolerance, be tolerant; also the tolerated should (Popper). Unlike the classic notion of tolerance in which the major challenge was to restrain dogmatic beliefs in the age of pluralism it is unlimited restraint, sometimes leading to unaccounted indifference that should be limited (Popper). Moreover, in our global pluralist society tolerance can be initiated by the less powerful group, as an alternative to intolerance and violence (Gandhi). The implication is that tolerance in a pluralist society becomes more reciprocal.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Creppell, I., *Toleration and Identity*, New York, Routledge, 2003.
Fitzgerald, G., *Toleration or Solidarity?*, in: *The Politics of Toleration*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999, p. 13–25.
Fletcher, G. P., *The Instability of Tolerance*, in: *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, D. Hyde (ed.), Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 158–172.
Gandhi, M. K., *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Boston, Beacon, 1957.
Halbertal, M., *Autonomy, Toleration, Group Rights*, in: *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, D. Hyde (ed.), Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 106–113.
Herman, B., *Pluralism and the Community of Moral Judgment*, in: *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, D. Hyde (ed.), Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 60–80.
Horton, J., *Toleration as a Virtue*, in: *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, D. Hyde (ed.), Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 28–43.
Hyde, D., *Introduction*, in: *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, D. Hyde (ed.), Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 3–17.
Mendus, S., *Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism*, Atlantics Highlights, NJ, Humanities Press International, 1989.
Nicholson, P. K., *Toleration as a Moral Ideal*, in: *Aspects of Toleration*, J. Horton and S. Mendus (eds), London, Methuen, 1985, p. 158–173.
Popper, K. R., *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. 1, London, Routledge, 1945.
Popper, K. R., *In Search of a Better World*, London, Routledge, 1994.
Popper, K. R., *All Life is Problem Solving*, London, Routledge, 1999.
Scanlon**,** T. M., *The Difficulty of Tolerance*' in: *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, D. Hyde (ed.), Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 226–240.
Weale, A., *Toleration, Individual Differences and Respect for Persons*, in: *Aspects of Toleration*, J. Horton and S. Mendus (eds.), London, Methuen, p. 16–35.
Williams, B., *Toleration: An Impossible Virte?*, in: D. Hyde (ed.), Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 18–27.