

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/how-fighting-ends/>

The speaker discusses their book titled "Stan the Art of Defeat: A History of Surrender," which analyzes the dynamics of warfare, particularly the cessation of fighting and the concept of surrender. The book is available in German and Italian, with no English translation.

The speaker emphasizes that the book primarily focuses on the nature of battles and how they conclude, rather than peace conferences or political histories. They explore why soldiers fight, what motivates surrender, and the circumstances relating to it, arguing that the act of surrender is often tied to saving lives, though it's not the sole reason wars end.

The narrative recounts historical examples, including the high casualty rates at battles like the First Battle of the Somme, to highlight the willingness of soldiers to risk their lives. The author draws a distinction between systemic and non-systemic wars; the former adhere to certain rules that allow for a formal acknowledgment of defeat, while in non-systemic wars, the lack of rules often results in total annihilation of the losing side.

The speaker elaborates on the evolution of the rules of surrender from early warfare practices to the codified rules across different eras, citing examples such as the ransom practices of the Middle Ages and the Geneva Conventions. They contend that despite the inherent violence of war, the establishment and adherence to rules can reduce suffering and fatalities, thereby humanizing the chaotic nature of war.

Overall, the book aims to provide insight into the complexities of surrender within historical contexts, affirming the importance of rules in mitigating the brutality of warfare.