

**WAR
WITH
HONOUR**

A.A.MILNE

MACMILLAN

WAR PAMPHLETS

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WAR WITH HONOUR

By

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Six years ago Mr. A. A. Milne wrote his book, *Peace with Honour*, in revolt against what he called "the convention" of war. Looking back on the conclusions he drew then he writes: "If anybody reads *Peace with Honour* now, he must read it with that one word *HITLER* scrawled across every page." One man's fanaticism has cancelled rational argument. "And since," he continues, "I want to be listened to now, I must make this attempt to keep the ear of the Pacifists who

listened to me once, in order that I may explain to them, not why one ardent Pacifist has suddenly become, as they would say, a 'violent militarist', but why it is the very ardour of his Pacifism, unchanged since 1934, which inspires his passion now for military victory."

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WAR WITH HONOUR

"Prendergast rose from the body. 'Poison,' he said briefly. 'One of the barbituric group.' I remembered suddenly the Brown-Smiley case.¹" And at the bottom of the page the irrelevant observation "¹*The Brown-Smiley Case* (Pump. 7s. 6d.)."

Like most readers of detective stories, I have resented this method of self-advertisement which I am now to practise. My apology is that the practice is forced on me by the scope and intention of this pamphlet. For it is an epilogue to a book called *Peace with Honour* which I wrote in 1933-34, and it is addressed primarily, but not exclusively, to readers of that book. That is to say, it is addressed to Pacifists by a Pacifist. I do not think that I could possibly write of this war without

referring to what I have already written about War; and I must take the risk that some of you may seek further reference at your own expense. The risk is a small one, and my personal profit negligible.

"Peace with Honour"

I wrote *Peace with Honour: An Enquiry into the War Convention* as an ordinary man who hated war. My soul revolted against it; my heart revolted against it; but most of all my mind revolted against it. War, it seemed to me, was just a convention, as stupid and as evil as had been the convention of duelling. There may still be an individual here and there who thinks that if one man accidentally treads on another man's toe, he should rightly be called upon to defend his life by taking the other man's life; but most of us have outgrown such beliefs. Yet while such conventions existed, it seemed natural enough; just as it seems natural now for a man to take his hat off when he meets a woman whom he knows. But taking one's hat off is convention, not nature: as conventional as, and no more natural than, raising the arm and saying "*Heil*, Hitler." War, I felt, was not the human nature it was so often said to be, but only a convention. When two individuals disagree, they go, conventionally, to Law. When two nations disagreed, and neither would give way, they went, equally conventionally, to War. I did not see why the convention should not be changed, so that they too went to Law.

Art may be summed up as integrity of aim. The art of writing a play is to choose a theme and stick to it; the art of fighting a war is to choose an objective and gain it. And the art of writing *An Enquiry into the War Convention* is to enquire into the conventions of war. Many readers told me that I had ignored the economic causes of war. Of course I had; just as in an earlier age I should have ignored the sartorial causes of duels, however many had been fought over the colour of a cravat. Had mankind decided to eliminate all causes of duels, it would have had the impossible task of eliminating all differences of opinion. Mankind found it easier to eliminate, not the causes, but the conventional result of such causes.

It is true that, if an economic or other cause of war can be removed, there is so much less chance of war. If jealousy, or other cause of murder, can be removed, there is so much less opportunity for capital punishment. But capital punishment is not abolished in Chipping Norton just because no murders are being committed there; nor is the war convention destroyed just because certain causes of war have been removed. A Greek cynic, ruminating on the cause of the Trojan war, would have said that it was silly to fight for ten years about a girl. But a Greek Pacifist, feeling strongly on the subject, would wish to do something more immediate than wait until man had become hermaphrodite and there were no girls to fight about. He would wish to destroy the convention that, if your wife got tired of you and left you for another man, "honour" demanded that for ten years your brother should kill everybody in sight, in order to advertise your extreme unattractiveness as a husband.

I was a Pacifist. I wished to destroy the conventional belief that war was an honourable way of settling international disputes. I wished to destroy the conventional definitions of "national honour" and "national prestige": the conventional acceptance of war by the Churches: the conventional glorification of war by the poets; I wished to destroy all that had been conventionally thought about war by those who had not thought about war; I wished my readers to look at modern war with their own eyes, not at a tradition of war through the eyes of their ancestors. That was why I called my book *An Enquiry into the War Convention*.

Strange Company

Writers are known, less by what they write, than by the labels which other people write for them: a misleading form of knowledge. I was now labelled "Pacifist". It was not long before I found myself invited into strange company. I was told that war would persist until capitalism was abolished, and I was invited to wear a red tie and join the Communist party. I was told that war would persist until the banks were abolished, and I was invited to wear a green shirt and support the Douglas Credit Scheme. I was told that war would persist until sin had been abolished, and I was invited to wear ashes on my head and be one with the Oxford Group. All these correspondents gave me the impression that what they really wanted was to establish their particular Utopia, leaving Peace to emerge, if she could, as one of the by-products. I accepted none of their invitations.

A year later I was privileged to meet Pacifists with no other axe to grind, but Pacifists with whom also (so much the worse for me, perhaps) I did not identify myself. It was a meeting, under the leadership of Dick Sheppard, of people not otherwise unknown, and now known to be ardent for Peace. For the most part, or so it seemed to me, they were concerned with their own personal conduct in the next war. They would not fight, of course; but could they conscientiously engage in non-combatant work? How would their souls feel if they succoured the wounded? Was that a betrayal of their principles? One speaker told us at great length of his experiences in the last war as a "total" conscientious objector. He had been imprisoned by the military on several occasions and as often had escaped. He had a technique, not only of escape but of passive resistance, warranted to baffle any ordinary sergeant-major, the secret of which he was prepared to pass on to all of us. It was clear that he had had a perfectly grand war; so much more interesting than mine. He was getting ready for another grand war. Now in as far as I had a conscientious objection to war (and I doubt if "conscience" really came into it, for my objection was more of the mind and the heart), I had a conscientious objection to war as an institution, not to the faint possibility that in a particular war a rifle in my hands might hit something. War seemed to me a wicked waste of Life, of Time, of Beauty, of Opportunity, and I didn't mind who stopped it, as long as it was stopped; I didn't mind how it was stopped, as long as it was stopped. If it could be stopped peacefully and quickly, so much the better; if it could only be stopped laboriously and at some loss of life, so much the worse. The point was that this waste of everything lovely in the world should not go on. Had it been revealed to

me by an angel in the night that Universal and Perpetual Peace could only come, and would only come, as the result of one more devastating war, I should have said, "Good, let's start to-morrow. Who do we fight?" And my services, combatant or non-combatant as required, would have been at the disposal of the Cause.

But, in any case, war had never seemed to me to be a matter which concerned my personal conscience. It was a matter which concerned the conscience of Civilisation. I shared her guilt, and worked for her redemption. If there were another war, then I had taken part in another war. If there were Universal Peace, then, and only then, I had renounced war for ever.

There was another respect in which I seemed to differ from my fellow-pacifists. These were all talking as if their real activities began when war was declared; but I knew that when war was declared our activities ended; for we had failed. I knew that it was impossible to preach the renunciation of war in war-time; for one would seem only to be preaching the stopping of that particular war, and preaching to only one of the combatants. By saying "*Stop it, Bingo! Naughty dog!*" to a bull-terrier in a mix-up, one does not advance the campaign for the muzzling of all loose dogs. I knew that the renunciation of war could only be effectively preached between wars; just as (I suppose, but I have never gone into the matter) the cause of Temperance can only be effectively preached between drinks.

Conscientious Objection

I think, perhaps, that that word "effectively" is the key to the sort of Pacifist I was, and am. In my young days a well-known Nonconformist preacher felt a conscientious objection to the payment of rates which provided religious education in schools. He did not (naturally) object to religious education in schools, but he objected to the particular form which it took. Having worked out the proportion of his payment devoted to education, and then the proportion of this proportion which might be supposed to sustain the little daily dose of religion, he deducted as it might be 15*s.* 6*d.* from his rates, and announced his readiness to die, or go to prison, on this point of conscience; the result being that the authorities distrained on his silver tea-pot. An admirer of the tenacity and religious fervour thus displayed would then buy him back the tea-pot for 15*s.* 6*d.*, feeling that no man so good should be so wantonly deprived, and in another six months it would be all ready for the next distraint process. In this way a conscience was saved from sin, a Cause was advanced, and a tea-pot was kept in circulation.

Well, it may be that the Cause was advanced, for the ridiculousness of the proceedings provided some advertisement in the cheaper press; but only so, I felt, could this form of passive resistance be justified. To me passive resistance, civil disobedience, and conscientious objection were just ways of supporting a Cause in which one believed. If they failed, I was as ready to give it the conscientious support of civil obedience, or of active resistance to all its enemies. All I demanded was that the support should be effective.

I may be asked now if my "conscience" (and the tone of voice will certainly put it into inverted commas) will allow me to do *anything*, however wrong in itself, for a Cause in which I believe. Would it allow me, for instance, to lie? My only possible answer would be that it would depend on the Cause. But, broadly speaking, I may say that I consider my soul my own, as I consider my mind my own and my body my own. I should feel justified, though I might not have the courage, to risk my life, my body, to save another's. I feel that I am equally justified in risking my soul to save the soul of another. My soul, my conscience, seem to me of small importance in comparison with the souls of millions. To prevent the corruption of the souls of all the children of the world, there is no sin which I would not commit. And in case this sounds heroic, I hurry to add that, in these circumstances, of course, it would not seem to me to be a sin.

This would appear to be the moment for some reference to a chapter in *Peace with Honour*, much applauded at the time by many, much condemned by others, and now continually quoted back at me; a chapter called "Onward Christian Soldiers". Well, I shall refer to it in its place. But I may say now that I am not seriously concerned to apologise for it, justify it, or (in the manner of many recent correspondents) get excited about it. "What did Mr. Gladstone say in 1874?" was once supposed to be the unanswerable question which would put any political candidate out of gear. "What did you say in 1934?" leaves me unmoved; or would, if I were not afraid that the difference between 1934 and 1940 is less apparent to those who ask the question than it is to me. For there is a difference; and the difference can be given in one word. A Cabinet Minister, perhaps better informed than I,

perhaps, though I hate to think it, more intelligent, said to me at the end of 1934: "I agreed with every word of your book—except one."

The word was "Hitler".

II

Europe was at Peace

Peace with Honour was begun in 1933. Hitler was Chancellor, but not yet in full power, nor fully self-exposed. Mussolini was in full power and, as always, in full voice, but as yet threatening nobody. On the surface Europe was at peace. Yet there they were: Hitler and Mussolini: men utterly without scruple. One could neither ignore them, nor appeal to their reason. One could only explain them away. I imagined a reader saying: "What is the good of talking about peace, and the abolition of armaments, and morality, and common sense: what is the good of reasoning at all? Abolish Germany, and there might be some hope of abolishing war." So for the space of a chapter called "Fascist Interlude", I tried to "abolish Germany": that is, to abolish the Hitler bogey.

My argument, briefly, was this: that though Fascism could only exist on the threat of war, it could not survive war; that is, that the aftermath of war in a Fascist country (or, likely

enough, in any country) would be revolution, the nightmare of autocracy. The policy, therefore, of the Fascist autocrat was to threaten war rather than to make it: to keep his people in subjection to his will by representing that their subjection was a military necessity for the safety or advancement of the state.

It was a good theory; it was true as far as it went. But it forgot that autocrats are not their own masters. Events are too much for them.

One Word—Hitler

If anybody reads *Peace with Honour* now, he must read it with that one word "HITLER" scrawled across every page. Before every irresistible conclusion to which I seek to draw him he must insert another premise: HITLER. Lord Randolph Churchill said on a famous occasion that he "forgot Goschen". I "forgot Hitler"—Hitler as we now know him. Perhaps I should have known then; perhaps I could not have known. Though the book was written in such ignorance, perhaps it was worth writing; for that disfiguring word "Hitler" does not blot out every line, nor cancel all the truths. Perhaps on balance it would have been better unwritten. All this would be grotesquely unimportant if I were merely trying to defend myself. But if I say, as I would wish to say, "Never mind what I said in 1934, listen to me *now*", I cannot escape the retort: "If you were right then, why need we? If you were wrong then, why should we?" And since I want to

be listened to now, I must make this attempt to keep the ear of the Pacifists who listened to me once, in order that I may explain to them, not why one ardent Pacifist has suddenly become, as they would say, a "violent militarist", but why it is the very ardour of his Pacifism, unchanged since 1934, which inspires his passion now for military victory.

"Onward Christian Soldiers"

Every one of us has had the experience of writing a letter which is totally misunderstood by the reader. Why? We have used simple words, words of only one meaning, and have expressed ourselves clearly and in reasonably good English. We thought we were writing a friendly letter, and are shocked to find that it has been bitterly resented. Why has this happened? Simply because the spirit behind the letter as we wrote, the background of the letter, was left out of the envelope. A quotation, a family joke, will have a false meaning for one who does not see the unwritten inverted commas; an innocent anecdote may seem to refer to something of which, in fact, the writer had no knowledge. Words can say much and leave much unsaid.

I turned just now to a page in that chapter of which I was talking, "Onward Christian Soldiers", and read the realistic description of war to which the following words are the postscript: "This is war. No Church condemns it. Bishops approve heartily of it. Accredited Chaplains accompany the combatants to see that the religious side of their life is not

neglected. What does it all mean? Does one laugh or does one cry?"

The description of war begins thus:

"Two nations are in dispute about something.... It seems to be, and may in fact be, to the material advantage of either to enforce possession of it!"

It ends thus:

"When the fortitude of one government gives way, the government of the winning nation settles the original cause of dispute by taking as much of the loser's wealth or territory as it can profitably assimilate."

A little later, in an imaginary cross-examination of a clergyman, he is made to say:

C. "Do you really mean that you are prepared for a German army to march through the streets of London, for Germany to dictate whatever humiliating terms she pleases, to exact indemnities, to make unlawful annexations, to——?"

M. "I am not prepared for, in the sense of being happily acquiescent in, any of these things. In fact I should hate them. It would be easy to feel intensely humiliated by them.... But we don't go killing people in order to relieve or prevent our humiliation. Whence do you get this extraordinary idea that, though man must suffer all things rather than do wrong, a nation can do all the wrong it likes rather than suffer anything...?"

And a little later:

M. "You see what I'm looking for, don't you? The point where Christianity ends and Patriotism begins."

War as we Knew it

Now why does the one unwritten word "Hitler" make it plain to any intelligent person that I was not writing, and could not have been writing, with a foreknowledge of 1935-39? Well, let us look at some of the words which I did write.

In the first passage: *Material advantage*.

In the second passage: *Wealth*.

In the third passage: *Indemnities ... humiliation*.

In the fourth passage: *Patriotism*.

Read the book again, read any passage again, and you see at once that it is a pre-Hitler book. It is an indictment of war as we knew it; war to which both sides were a party because both sides agreed to the convention; the convention that "patriotism" rightly preferred war to "humiliation" or "insult": that war was justified by economic causes or the need for living-room: that "prestige" was something worth killing for; the convention that if some small material advantage was withheld from a country by another, "honour" demanded that she should suffer (among other things) the infinitely greater material disadvantage of a war, on the fifty-fifty chance that she would get the smaller advantage which she had once needed.

Now that is the "background" of the book: my detestation of the wickedness of war as a killing for material ends, of the stupidity of war as a conventional sacrifice out of all proportion to the material ends gained. This intense feeling in my mind inspired the book; led me to write it with the fervour of the crusader rather than with the detachment of the scientist. I withdraw none of it as an indictment of war in 1934; I offer none of it as an indictment against our share of the war of 1939.

Hitler has made just that difference.

Total Conquest

For Hitler does not only make total war, he makes, or seeks to make, total conquest; conquest, not only of the material possessions of a country, but of its bodies and souls. When Hitler conquers, the Gestapo rules. Describe what is happening to Poland now in the most moderate language which your feelings will allow you, and you will not find yourself using such words as "humiliation", "insult" and "material loss". Hitler's "war" is not the international war we know. It is a war for the destruction of all Christian and civilised values. Not a war between nations, but a war between Good and Evil. Hitler is a crusader against God; just that.

There is no argument about this. It is all set out by himself in Rauschnig's book, *Hitler Speaks*. In Hitler's view the ordinary man has no right to an independent spiritual existence; he is intended for use in a machine; and when he is in Hitler's power, he will be so used. Hitler is literally the enemy of Humanity, for he does not believe in Humanity. He is the self-elected, self-confessed anti-Christ. Evil is his good.

Well, do we resist him?

The Pacifist Argues

I have heard two arguments used by those who, believing that he is this, still hesitate to resist him. The first takes this form:

"You say that he seeks to conquer our souls. He cannot. Man's soul is unconquerable. An enemy may take our possessions from us, he may harm our bodies, but he cannot force us into doing wrong. He cannot corrupt our souls. God has told us to suffer all things for His sake; our very sufferings will be a testimony to Him."

We need waste no time in a theological argument on the ethics of martyrdom. The answer is simply this. Man's soul may be unconquerable, but a child's soul is not. Hitler can corrupt the souls of children; he has corrupted the souls of hundreds of thousands of children. He has deliberately trained the Hitler Youth to cruelty. He has "hardened" them against all danger of spiritual infection. He has dehumanised them, and used them.

Do we resist him?

The other argument is—well, it is not so much an argument as a woolly-minded hangover from some earlier war. It takes the form of saying that Hitler may be Evil, but are we Good? Look at our own record! Who are we to talk? And so on.

Well, who is anybody to talk at any time? Because one is fighting against Evil, and consequently for Good against Evil, one does not claim to be entirely good. One can rescue a cat from a boy who is ill-treating it, whether or not one has borrowed thirty shillings from the cashbox to put on the 2.30. Even if in the past we had committed the very evil which we are now fighting (and we have not), we could, and should, fight it now.

But I should like to say something about this matter of "our own record". One of those who wrote to me about *Peace with Honour* was a German from Hamburg. Whether his letter was written freely or as a piece of organised propaganda I do not know. But he expressed agreement with such of the book as did not criticise Nazi Germany, and assured me of the peaceful happiness of all Germans under Nazi rule. In reply I said that I couldn't help feeling doubtful of the happiness of some of the Germans in concentration camps. He made the obvious German retort: "Look at your own record! What about the concentration camps in South Africa?"

Well, that was easy. I didn't defend, nor want to defend, the concentration camps in South Africa. I didn't bother to point out that the identity between the two "concentrations" was an identity of name only. All that needed to be said was this: In England thousands of people could, did, and were freely allowed to, condemn the concentration camps; in Germany anybody who opened his mouth about them was sent to one himself. That is the difference between Liberty and Tyranny, between Good and Evil. We are not, after all, such unworthy representatives of the Good.

German Peace

As Pacifists have so often pointed out, when one has accepted nine wars, it is easy to accept the tenth without thinking. But it is just as easy, when one has condemned nine

wars, to condemn the tenth without thinking. The Militarist says "War is human nature", and with these words abandons thought. It would be a pity if the Pacifist were to abandon thought when once he had said "War is wicked".

For he would be making just the mistake which he has so often condemned in the militarist: that of loyalty to a word whose meaning has changed.

In 1934 I wrote "The word War has lost its meaning. It is no longer War. It is something for which the word has not yet been invented, something as far removed from the Napoleonic Wars as they were from a boxing match." I begged my readers, therefore, to forget all which they had ever thought about War, and to think all over again about Modern War. For "as a *new* thought Modern War is completely unthinkable."

The word Peace has now lost its meaning. It is no longer Peace. I beg my readers to forget all which they have ever thought about Peace, and to think all over again about German Peace: the Peace which Poland (no longer at war) is now experiencing. For as a new thought German Peace is completely unthinkable.

In 1934 I wrote "Modern War means, quite definitely, and without any mental escape, choking and poisoning and torturing to death thousands of women and children. Whether you are Christian or Jew, atheist or agnostic, you have got to fit acceptance of this into your philosophy of life.... Here is the fact now and you have got to justify to yourself your

acceptance of it; and the justification has got to be based on such ultimate truths as will always be sacred to you."

That was addressed to the Church in 1934: "Onward Christian Soldiers". I address it to myself now. I accept the facts, and I accept this war. For German Peace means all that Modern War means—and worse. It means not only the torturing to death of bodies but the poisoning to death of souls.... And the ultimate truth which will always be sacred is that the soul is more important than the body.

To-day we cannot choose between the Heaven of Peace and the Hell of War. We must choose between two Hells. The Hell of "Peace" which we have rejected lies at the very bottom of the abyss.

Crying "Wolf"

The fable of the boy who amused himself by crying "Wolf!" so often that the villagers no longer believed him when the wolf came is used, like all fables, to point a moral. The moral is directed against the boy. "Silly boy! See what happened to him!" But the moral might equally be directed against the villagers. Silly villagers! See what happened to *them*! For, though the boy may have been no great loss, they also lost their flocks. Did they deserve to lose them? Let us consider the reasoning which went on in a villager's mind.

1. This boy said "Wolf!" three times when there was no wolf.
2. It is therefore certain that there is no wolf this time.

Could any reasoning be sillier? What he should have thought was:

1. The boy is only there because it is extremely likely that a wolf *will* come one day.
2. It is certain that, when the wolf does come, the boy will call out.
3. It is not certain, after the thrashing I gave him yesterday, that he will call out again if the wolf doesn't come.
4. Therefore the chances are that the wolf is here.

And even if it turned out to be another false alarm, the reasoning would be just as true at the next alarm. Stupid, stupid villagers!

To many Pacifists (indeed, to all who write to me) the great stumbling-block in the way is the fact that "Wolf!" has been cried before.

"A war to end war?" they say derisively. "You said that of the last war!"

"Hitler is the devil?" they jeer. "You said that of the Kaiser!"

"This war is different from any other war? Why, you yourself pointed out that militarists said that of every war!"

"We are fighting for Freedom? How you derided these fights for Freedom!"

"We are fighting for God? How fiercely you attacked the Churches for identifying God with their country!"

It is a very good retort; it would carry the house in any school debating society; but it doesn't prove that there is no wolf.

I wrote somewhere once that the third-rate mind was only happy when it was thinking with the majority, the second-rate mind was only happy when it was thinking with the minority, and the first-rate mind was only happy when it was thinking. With equal truth it may be said that a first-rate mind is not one which does not remember the past, nor is it one which cannot forget the past; it is a mind which will use the past but not be ordered by it. It is a mind independent of everybody and everything but the facts in front of it. It is as little perturbed to find itself sharing a thought with the simple as it is elated to find itself sharing a thought with the subtle. It will fight for what it has discovered to be right, as

happily in the serried ranks of the Blimps as in the lonely company of the Shaws.

Even though all the stupid militarists cried "Wolf!" when there was no wolf, yet the wolf is at our door now. Even though all the clever Pacifists said that there was no wolf, when there was no wolf, yet the wolf is at our door now. If we cling to the theory that wolves are delightful creatures when treated kindly as cubs, then perhaps this one wasn't treated kindly as a cub. If we proved conclusively six years ago that wolves never came as far west as England, then perhaps this one has escaped from a zoo, or is some foul hybrid unknown to zoology. What does it matter how right or wrong we were in the past? There is death, and worse than death, waiting for ourselves and our children. What do we do?

III

Three Possibilities

In theory there are three possibilities:

1. The victory of Britain.
2. The victory of Germany.
3. Peace without victory:

(a) leaving Germany in possession of what she has already won;

(b) leaving Germany in possession of no more of German Europe than is agreed to be rightfully hers.

This last possibility (3), in either alternative, is "PEACE NOW!", the slogan of certain Pacifists.

Now I have said that I was the sort of Pacifist who was concerned to make his pacifism effective. I don't mean by this that I refuse to write anything about Peace unless everybody promises to read it; nor that, when they have read it, I expect them immediately to act on it. I mean that I put down what I think in the most effective words I know, and I take care that the book so written is put before the public in the most effective way. If, as a result, I persuade ten people to accept the Cause, then I have made an effective contribution to the Cause. If, by reason of bad writing, illogical argument, or ill-timed publication, I persuade nobody, then, even though my own passionate love of Peace shines out as clearly, I consider myself by this much the less a Pacifist, that I have brought nothing to the Cause but my own ineffective self.

I am still a Pacifist, but I hope a practical Pacifist. I still want to abolish war. Which of these three possibilities gives us the best chance of abolishing war? None gives us a certainty; but which gives us the most effective taking-off place?

Victory for Germany means that Britain, like the rest of Europe, comes under German Peace. I have already said that in my own opinion such Peace is worse than War. Were I alive to see it, as I hope I shall not be, I should want to write an indictment of "Peace". Other Pacifists might still feel that War was the great enemy. Would they be in a good position to indict it? Not from the concentration camps where, under German rule, all good Pacifists go. They know, and I know, that we should only be able to write or to preach what Goebbels, or some contemptible Fascist representative of his, instructed us to write, or allowed us to preach.

Peace without Victory, or "Peace Now". In considering this, the practical Pacifist has two questions to ask himself: "Can I help to bring it about?" "When it comes, can I make effective use of it?"

If he thinks that a victory for Britain will best advance the Cause, he *can* help to bring victory to Britain.

If he thinks that a victory for Germany will best advance the Cause, he *can* help to bring victory to Germany.

But can he help to stop the war *now*?

No. He may talk, he may write, he may distribute pamphlets, he may shout himself hoarse on soap-boxes, but he is not stopping the war. If Hitler and Goring were listening, and nodding their heads, and saying "This man Hopkinson talks extraordinary good sense——" But no, that is not fair. It would be enough if they could hear him; so that he could say: "Well, I did my best. I told them, and if they

didn't believe me, it is not my fault." But he knows that they can't hear him; he knows that nothing which he preaches has the slightest effect on Germany. Yet, even so, he might say: "It is for me to preach to *my* countrymen, it is for like-minded Germans to preach to *theirs*. Between us we shall stop the war." Yes, that would be an answer ... did he not know that like-minded Germans are shot or put in concentration camps when they preach.

So then, only one of the combatants, England, is being told to stop the war. If England could stop the war, "leaving Germany in possession of no more of German Europe than is agreed to be rightfully hers", then England would have won the war. If England did stop the war, "leaving Germany in possession of what she had already won", then England would have lost the war. So that when the Pacifist bellows "Stop the war!" he is either bellowing "Win the war!" which is what we are trying to do, or "Surrender!" which is what Germany is trying to make us do. In neither case is he helping to bring about Peace without Victory.

"Peace without Victory"

The Pacifists cry "Stop the War!" is, then, wholly ineffective in bringing about the desired result, Peace without Victory. But even if it were effective, would Peace without Victory be an effective taking-off place for the abolition of war?

One has often heard the argument: The only hope for a stable world after the war is an agreed Peace now, for Peace *with* Victory creates nothing but bitterness and the seeds of future wars. Now if this were true: if, that is, the fact that it has been true in the past made it a truth for all time: then the Cause is lost. For Germany has already won "Peace with Victory" over Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg and France. Bitterness and the seeds of future wars have been sown so lavishly over the greater part of Europe, that there is no hope for a stable world. It may be answered that, if we came to an agreed peace with Germany now, we could "doubtless" (which means that the speaker would rather not explain how) arrange with Germany that these countries should be restored. Excellent. But this means that Germany can conquer *nine* countries, remain herself unconquered, and yet sow no seeds of future wars. If the Pacifist believes this, why is he so afraid of Britain conquering *one* country?

The truth is, of course, that, as between the nations of Europe, Peace without Victory is now impossible. The victories have been obtained. As between England and Germany it is still possible. And then what?

Peace without Victory means that Hitler is still in power. Now two facts stand out so obviously that it is almost ridiculous to call attention to them: as if one stood at the top of Ludgate Hill with a friend and said: "I don't know if you've noticed any sort of church in the neighbourhood."

1. We cannot dethrone Hitler (and Mussolini) except by defeating them.
2. Until Hitler and Mussolini are dethroned, proposals for the abolition of war must be completely ineffective.

Here are Mussolini's own words:

"Fascism does not believe either in the possibility or in the utility of perpetual peace. A doctrine that is based on the premise of peace is foreign to Fascism."

We need not bother to look for similar words from Hitler. Action speaks louder. We know what happened to the German winner of the Nobel Peace Prize....

It seems, then, that the Pacifist can neither help to obtain, nor make any effective use of, Peace without Victory.

This leaves, as the only possibility offering him any hope for the Cause, *Victory for Britain*.

For Democracy

Victory for Britain is a victory for democracy over autocracy. There is no hope for the Cause except through democracy.

There are two reasons for thinking this. The first is that we have reached a stage in human progress when the vast majority of the peoples of the world are Pacifists. This is due partly to the bitter lessons we have learnt as to the complete futility of war; partly to our knowledge of the increasing barbarity of war; and mostly to our realisation that the horrors of war must now be endured, not only by professional warriors, but by every one of us.

But though the peoples of the world are Pacifists, individuals in the world are not. The march of civilization is like the march of a medieval army. There are skirmishers in front, there is a main body, there are stragglers. In estimating the advance of civilization no account is taken of the stragglers. If we say that we are cleaner than our forefathers, we are not thinking of tramps and verminous children. If we say that we are less credulous, we are not thinking of the fools who run and the fools who read the Sunday astrologer's column. And so, if we say, and say rightly, that we are now more humane, more alive to and shocked by the evils of the Rule of Force, we are leaving out of our reckoning the individual gangster and the individual murderer. In a democratic country the people, the main body of troops, mark the stage of civilization which that country has reached: a stage of civilization which is now beyond war. But in a totalitarian state the gangster may easily be the autocrat. This is one reason why the people (democracy) offer a safeguard

for peace which cannot be offered by the individual (autocracy).

The other reason is this: a totalitarian state by definition exists for the benefit of the state, not for the benefit of its members. But if the state claims to have a life of its own to which the life of every individual is subordinate, then its life can only be a life in competition with other states; its only victories over its competitors. One can see that this must be so if one imagines a group of islanders in the Pacific, cut off from the rest of mankind, forming themselves into a totalitarian state: in which each individual is told, "Nothing which happens to you matters; the only thing which matters is the welfare of the island." We see that this is nonsense; we see that the only "welfare of the island" conceivable is the welfare of each individual islander. And we see that a totalitarian island can only justify its existence by competing with, and obtaining victories over, neighbouring islands. Inevitably a successful war is the complete victory, the ultimate form of the island-state's self-expression.

It is clear, therefore, that whether Hitlerism, Mussolinism, Stalinism and any similar form of government are to be regarded as the expression of a genuine political doctrine or merely as an excuse for autocracy, they are, they must be, a barrier to the peace of the world. If this war ensures the triumph of democracy, and only if so, then it may end war.

Yes, I know that we said the last war would end war—and it didn't. And the Wright Brothers said of each successive immature aeroplane that it would fly—and it didn't. And each successive expedition said that it would get to the Pole

—and it didn't. But men did not give up hope, and in the end they won. Are we Pacifists really such cowards that we, alone among men, surrender the Cause at the first failure? I cannot believe it.

"I Believe..."

When one argues about something which seems self-evident, when one tries to prove something for which no proof seems needed, it is difficult to know where to begin, and when to stop. If I were trying to prove to a friend that two sixpences were of the same value as a shilling I might find myself saying, "Well, you admit, I suppose, that twice six is twelve?" If the answer were a dogged "No", I should hold my head in my hands, and think: "Now is it any good asking if he admits that twice one is two? Dare I risk it? Because if he doesn't, where am I? How much farther back can we go?"

Possibly my friend, who is convinced that two sixpences make half a crown, is subject to the same misgivings.

Well, I believe that twice one is two, and I also believe these things:

I believe that Nazi rule is the foulest abomination with which mankind has ever been faced.

I believe that, if it is unresisted, it will spread over, and corrupt, the whole world.

I believe that no decent man, no humane man, no honest man: no man of courage, intelligence or imagination: no man who ever had a kindly thought for his neighbour or compassion for the innocent: no lover of truth, no lover of beauty, no lover of God could have a place in that world.

I believe, therefore, that it is as much the duty of mankind to reject such a world as it is the duty of any community to reject gangster rule.

I see no way of doing this save by the use of force.

I am not frightened by words. If this use of force be called International War, then for the first time in my life I approve of International War; if it be called Civil War, then, not for the first time, I approve of Civil War. If it be compared with the action of policemen, then, as often before, I am in favour of action by policemen. If it be called Resistance to Evil, then, as (I hope) always, I am for resistance to evil.

Only when we have resisted it and overcome it can Civilization resume its march.

To America

Perhaps I can best come to an end by quoting from some lines which I addressed to America at the beginning of May:

Yes, "War is Hell."

And Peace is Hell, if it's Peace with the Devil in power.

*Yet, if this is not your quarrel, and not your hour;
If you have chosen Peace, you have chosen well.
But—scatter your armies, burn your ships,
Tear the breech-block out of the gun;
Never again can you fight who fight not now,
No rallying-call can ever rise to your lips,
There lives no faith to which you can make your vow,
There is no Cause to fight for; only the one,
Only one gage of battle, only one battle-song;
Right against Wrong.*

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[The end of *War With Honour* by A. A. Milne]