Quotations about Liberty and Power #2: War and Peace

52 Quotations about War & Peace (2004-2013)
<oll.libertyfund.org/title/2496>

"To what baneful quarter, then, are we to look for the cause of the stagnation and misery which appear so general in human affairs? War! is the answer. There is no other cause. This is the pestilential wind which blasts the prosperity of nations. This is the devouring fiend which eats up the precious treasure of national economy, the foundation of national improvement, and of national happiness."

Quotations about Liberty and power <oll.libertyfund.org/title/2189>
[July, 2013]

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Introduction

Ever since the OLL went live to the public in March 2004 the issue of War & Peace has been of great concern to us. In fact, the first 5 quotes of the week dealt with war, peace, and patriotism. As we noted on May 3, 2004 when we posted our first quotation on War and Peace "The War in Afghanistan began in October 2001 soon after planning for the design and building of the OLL began. It was soon followed by the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 just a year before the launch of the OLL website in March 2004. So it is not surprising that war was at the back of the minds of the editors when the site was opened to the public."

Since then we have posted 52 quotations specifically on War & Peace and devoted a Special Topic this past Christmas to a set of 12 quotations for "The Twelve Days of Christmas" on the passage from the Gospel of Luke [chapter 2 verse 14] "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

We list this collection of quotations about War & Peace below (in reverse chronological order) so you can see what some of our authors have to say on the matter .

For further reading see the complete collection of 407 "Quotations about Liberty and Power" at the OLL website.

[Front page: illustration Jacques Callot, "Plundering and Burning a Village" (1633); quote by James Mill, *Commerce Defended* (1808), online at <oll.libertyfund.org/quote/323>, posted 29 August, 2011.]

Special Topic: "The Twelve Days of Christmas" on the Theme of "Peace on Earth and Goodwill towards Men"

We selected 12 quotations from the collection of texts in the Online Library of Liberty which deal with the theme of "peace on earth and goodwill towards men" for the holiday season of 2012. A new quotation was posted on each of the 12 days beginning with Christmas day. We started with the source of the original quotation from the New Testament, the Gospel of Luke chapter 2 verse 14, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," and then followed it with a new quotation each day.

The quote for Christmas day itself comes from a letter by Jan Huss (1372-1415) which was to be read out on Christmas Day to his supporters in Prague in 1412. [Thereafter the quotes are in chronological order.]:

> "Dear friends, although I am now separated from you, because perchance I am unworthy to preach much to you, nevertheless the love which I bear towards you urges me to write at least some brief words to my loved ones.
>
> Lo! dear friends, to-day, as it were, an angel is saying to the shepherds: I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all people. And suddenly a multitude of angels breaks into praise, saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill!"

The full quote can be found here <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/414>.

The quotations for the 12 Days of Christmas:

1. The First Day (25 December): Jan Huss' Christmas letters and his call for peace on earth (1412)
2. The Second Day (26 December): Petrarch on the mercenary wars in Italy and the need for peace on earth (1344)
3. The Third Day (27 December): Erasmus stands against war and for peace on earth (16th century)
4. The Fourth Day (28 December): Dante Alighieri on human perfectibility and peace on earth (1559)

5. The Fifth Day (29 December): Samuel Cooper on the Articles of Confederation and peace on earth (1780)
6. The Sixth Day (30 December): Vicesimus Knox on the Christian religion and peace on earth (1793)
7. The Seventh Day (31 December): Madison on "the most noble of all ambitions" which a government can have, of promoting peace on earth (1816)
8. The Eighth Day (1 January): Jefferson on the inevitability of revolution in England only after which there will be peace on earth (1817)
9. The Ninth Day (2 January): Condy Raguet on the anti-Christian character of protection and the need for peace on earth (1832)
10. The Tenth Day (3 January): Richard Cobden on public opinion and peace on earth (c. 1865)
11. The Eleventh Day (4 January): Mises on the gold standard and peace on earth (1934)
12. The Twelfth Day (5 January): Frank Chodorov on free trade as the harbinger of goodwill among men and peace on earth (1940)
13. The original statement from Luke 2: 14.

52 Quotations on the Theme of War and Peace

The quotations are put online in a short version (for the front page of the website) and a longer version so readers can see the quote in context. We provide here the long version with the shorter version indicated in bold text.

1. (3 January, 2013) - The 10th Day of Christmas: Richard Cobden on public opinion and peace on earth (c. 1865)
2. (1 January, 2013) - The 8th Day of Christmas: Jefferson on the inevitability of revolution in England only after which there will be peace on earth (1817)
3. (31 December, 2012) - The 7th Day of Christmas: Madison on “the most noble of all ambitions” which a government can have, of promoting peace on earth (1816)
4. (28 December, 2012) - The 4th Day of Christmas: Dante Alighieri on human perfectibility and peace on earth (1559)
5. (27 December, 2012) - The 3rd Day of Christmas: Erasmus stands against war and for peace on earth (16th century)
6. (26 December, 2012) - The 2nd Day of Christmas: Petrarch on the mercenary wars in Italy and the need for peace on earth (1344)
7. (25 December, 2012) - The 1st Day of Christmas: Jan Huss’ Christmas letters and his call for peace on earth (1412)
8. (24 December, 2012) - The evangelist Luke “on earth peace, good will toward men” (1st century)
9. (26 November, 2012) - Molinari on the elites who benefited from the State of War(1899)
10. (5 November, 2012) - John Bright calls British foreign policy “a gigantic system of outdoor relief (welfare) for the aristocracy” (1858)
11. (10 September, 2012) - James Madison on the necessity of separating the power of “the sword from the purse” (1793)
12. (3 September, 2012) - Sumner’s vision of the American Republic was a parsimonious government which had little to do (1898)
13. (13 August, 2012) - Sumner’s vision of the American Republic as a confederation of free and peaceful industrial commonwealths (1898)
14. (2 April, 2012) - Cobden argues that the British Empire will inevitably suffer retribution for its violence and injustice (1853)
15. (26 March, 2012) - John Bright on war as all the horrors, atrocities, crimes, and sufferings of which human nature on this globe is capable (1853)

16. (25 December, 2011) - Cobden on the complicity of the British people in supporting war (1852)
17. (28 November, 2011) - The City of War and the City of Peace on Achilles' new shield(900 BC)
18. (24 October, 2011) - Cobden on the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of other countries (1859)
19. (26 September, 2011) - Cobden urges the British Parliament not to be the "Don Quixotes of Europe" using military force to right the wrongs of the world (1854)
20. (29 August, 2011) - James Mill likens the expence and economic stagnation brought about by war to a "pestilential wind" which ravages the country (1808)
21. (22 August, 2011) - The Duke of Burgundy asks the Kings of France and England why "gentle peace" should not be allowed to return France to its former prosperity (1599)
22. (25 May, 2011) - Grotius on Moderation in Despoiling the Country of one's Enemies(1625)
23. (9 May, 2011) - Sumner and the Conquest of the United States by Spain (1898)
24. (13 September, 2010) - Trenchard on the dangers posed by a standing army (1698)
25. (9 August, 2010) - John Jay on the pretended as well as the just causes of war (1787)
26. (1 June, 2010) - Vicesimus Knox on how the aristocracy and the "spirit of despotism" use the commemoration of the war dead for their own aims (1795)
27. (7 March, 2010) - Milton warns Parliament's general Fairfax that justice must break free from violence if "endless war" is to be avoided (1648)
28. (30 November, 2009) - Madison argued that war is the major way by which the executive office increases its power, patronage, and taxing power (1793)
29. (20 July, 2009) - Thomas Jefferson on the Draft as "the last of all oppressions" (1777)
30. (25 May, 2009) - Daniel Webster thunders that the introduction of conscription would be a violation of the constitution, an affront to individual liberty, and an act of unrivaled despotism (1814)
31. (29 December, 2008) - Alexander Hamilton warns of the danger to civil society and liberty from a standing army since "the military state becomes elevated above the civil" (1787)
32. (17 November, 2008) - John Trenchard identifies who will benefit from any new war "got up" in Italy: princes, courtiers, jobbers, and pensioners, but definitely not the ordinary taxpayer (1722)
33. (18 February, 2008) - Adam Smith observes that the true costs of war remain hidden from the taxpayers because they are sheltered in the metropole far from the fighting and instead of increasing taxes the government pays for the war by increasing the national debt (1776)
34. (17 December, 2007) - James Madison on the need for the people to declare war and for each generation, not future generations, to bear the costs of the wars they fight (1792)
35. (5 November, 2007) - Thomas Gordon on standing armies as a power which is inconsistent with liberty (1722)
36. (10 September, 2007) - James Madison argues that the constitution places war-making powers squarely with the legislative branch; for the president to have these powers is the "the true nurse of executive aggrandizement" (1793)
37. (23 July, 2007) - St. Thomas Aquinas discusses the three conditions for a just war (1265-74)
38. (25 September, 2006) - A.V. Dicey noted that a key change in public thinking during the 19thC was the move away from the early close association between "peace and retrenchment" in the size of the government (1905)
39. (20 February, 2006) - J.M. Keynes reflected on that "happy age" of international commerce and freedom of travel that was destroyed by the cataclysm of the First World War (1920)
40. (9 January, 2006) - John Jay in the Federalist Papers discussed why nations go to war and concluded that it was not for justice but "whenever they have a prospect of getting any thing by it" (1787)
41. (21 November, 2005) - Thomas Gordon gives a long list of ridiculous and frivolous reasons why kings and tyrants have started wars which have led only to the enslavement and destruction of their own people (1737)
42. (19 September, 2005) - Hugo Grotius states that in an unjust war any acts of hostility done in that war are "unjust in themselves" (1625)

43. (12 September, 2005) - Hugo Grotius discusses the just causes of going to war, especially the idea that the capacity to wage war must be matched by the intent to do so (1625)
44. (20 June, 2005) - Herbert Spencer argued that in a militant type of society the state would become more centralised and administrative, as compulsory education clearly showed (1882)
45. (30 May, 2005) - William Graham Sumner denounced America's war against Spain and thought that "war, debt, taxation, diplomacy, a grand governmental system, pomp, glory, a big army and navy, lavish expenditures, political jobbery" would result in imperialism (1898)
46. (23 May, 2005) - Erasmus has the personification of Peace come down to earth to see with dismay how war ravages human societies (1521)
47. (1 November, 2004) - Ludwig von Mises laments the passing of the Age of Limited Warfare and the coming of Mass Destruction in the Age of Statism and Conquest(1949)
48. (23 August, 2004) - Thomas Hodgskin on the Suffering of those who had been Impressed or Conscripted into the despotism of the British Navy (1813)
49. (19 July, 2004) - Robert Nisbet on the Shock the Founding Fathers would feel if they could see the current size of the Military Establishment and the National Government (1988)
50. (21 June, 2004) - Adam Smith on the Sympathy one feels for those Vanquished in a battle rather than for the Victors (1762)
51. (17 May, 2004) - Hugo Grotius on sparing Civilian Property from Destruction in Time of War (1625)
52. (3 May, 2004) - Bernard Mandeville on how the Hardships and Fatigues of War bear most heavily on the "working slaving People" (1732)

Quotation No. 52. The 10th Day of Christmas: Richard Cobden on public opinion and peace on earth (c. 1865)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/408>]
[Date published: 3 January, 2013]

Richard Cobden (1804 – 1865)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

This quotation is part of a series for "The Twelve Days of Christmas" on the theme of "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men" [Luke 2:14]

In the mid-1860s Cobden was moved to write a lengthy letter to an unnamed minister who had been using his pulpit to praise the military exploits of the Duke of Wellington and to urge another war against the French. He chastises the minister for misusing his pulpit to promote war instead of taking Saint Luke's advice to seek "peace on earth and good will towards men". In the course of this long letter Cobden argues that the British people were traditionally a very bellicose people and that "we have been the most combative and aggressive community that has existed since the days of the Roman dominion." He argues that the wars against the French between 1793 and 1815 were undertaken not to promote liberty but "to deprive the French people of the right of self-government, and to place their liberties at the disposal of an arbitrary king, a corrupt church, and a depraved aristocracy". But this unthinking support for the government was beginning to change as a few small groups of committed individuals in the anti-slavery and free trade movements had shown. They had helped turn British public opinion against the slave trade (1808) and then slavery itself (1833), and most recently the policy of agricultural protection (1846). Cobden believed that the next cause for enlightened British public opinion to take up was that of opposition to war in which a new "peace party" would challenge the traditional British veneration of their "war heroes" and their victories in battles which were demonstrated in public monuments, the naming of streets and bridges after famous British victories, and even the erection of militaristic art in cathedrals and churches. Cobden believed the minister had erred in "join(ing) in the exaltation of military genius, or shar(ing) in the warlike triumphs of nation over nation, (instead of preaching) "Peace on EARTH and good will toward MEN."

THE QUOTATION

The British advocate of free trade and peace Richard Cobden (1804-1865) chides an unnamed reverend for using his pulpit to praise the bellicose statements of the Duke of Wellington. He reminds the reverend that he serves a higher master who urged mankind to pursue the goals of "peace on earth, good will towards men":

If, on the other hand, the real origin of the war be impressed upon the mind of the present generation, and it be known, popularly known, that, far from having been, as we are told it was, undertaken in behalf of liberty, or for the defence of our own shores, it was hatched upon the Continent in the secret counsels of despotic courts, and fed from the industry of England by her then oligarchial government; that its object was to deprive the French people of the right of self-government, and to place their liberties at the disposal

of an arbitrary king, a corrupt church, and a depraved aristocracy; then the opinion of the country, and its language and acts, will be totally different from what we have just described. Instead of feelings of resentment, there will be sentiments of regret; far from suspecting attacks from the French, the people of England, seeing through, and separating themselves from the policy by which their fathers were misled, will be rather disposed to level their suspicion at those who call upon them again, without one fact to warrant it, to put themselves in an attitude of defiance against their unoffending neighbour; and in lieu of constantly invoking the memory of their own exploits, or the reverses of their opponents, the English people will, under the circumstances which I have supposed, be anxious only for an oblivion of all memorials of an unjust and aggressive war….

But the most consolatory fact of the times is the altered feelings of the great mass of the people since 1793. There lies our great advantage. With the exception of a lingering propensity to strike for the freedom of some other people, a sentiment partly traceable to a generous sympathy, and in some small degree, I fear, to insular pride and ignorance, there is little disposition for war in our day. Had the popular tone been as sound in 1792, Fox and his friends would have prevented the last great war. But for this mistaken tendency to interfere by force in behalf of other nations there is no cure but by enlightening the mass of the people upon the actual condition of the Continental populations. This will put an end to the supererogatory commiseration which is sometimes lavished upon them, and turn their attention to the defects of their own social condition. I have travelled much, and always with an eye to the state of the great majority, who everywhere constitute the toiling base of the social pyramid; and I confess I have arrived at the conclusion that there is no country where so much is required to be done before the mass of the people become what it is pretended they are, what they ought to be, and what I trust they will yet be, as in England. There is too much truth in the picture of our social condition drawn by the Travelling Bachelor* of Cambridge University, and lately flung in our faces from beyond the Atlantic, to allow us any longer to delude ourselves with the idea that we have nothing to do at home, and may therefore devote ourselves to the elevation of nations of the Continent. It is to this spirit of interference with other countries, the wars to which it has led, and the consequent diversion of men's minds (upon the Empress Catherine's principle) from home grievances, that we must attribute the unsatisfactory state of the mass of our people.

But to rouse the conscience of the people in favour of peace, the whole truth must be told them of the part they have played in past wars. In every pursuit in which we embark, our energies carry us generally in advance of all competitors. How few of us care to remember that, during the first half of the last century, we carried on the slave-trade more extensively than all the world besides; that we made treaties for the exclusive supply of negroes; that ministers of state, and even royalty were not averse to profit by the traffic. But when Clarkson (to whom fame has not yet done justice) commenced his agitation against this vile commerce, he laid the sin at the door of the nation; he appealed to the conscience of the people, and made the whole community responsible for the crimes which the slave-traders were perpetrating with their connivance; and the eternal principles of truth and humanity, which are ever present in the breasts of men, however they may be for a time obscured, were not appealed to in vain. We are now, with our characteristic energy, first and foremost in preventing, by force, that traffic which our statesmen sought to monopolise a century ago.

It must be even so in the agitation of the peace party. They will never rouse the conscience of the people, so long as they allow them to indulge the comforting delusion that they have been a peace-loving nation. We have been the most combative and aggressive community that has existed since the days of the Roman dominion. Since the revolution of 1688 we have expended more than fifteen hundred millions of money upon wars, not one of which has been upon our own shores, or in defence of our hearths and homes. "For so it is," says a not unfriendly foreign critic,! "other nations fight at or near their own territory: the English everywhere." From the time of old Froissart, who, when he found himself on the English coast, exclaimed that he was among a people who "loved war better than peace, and where strangers were well received," down to the day of our amiable and admiring visitor, the author of the Sketch Book, who, in his pleasant description of John Bull, has portrayed him as always fumbling for his cudgel whenever a quarrel arose among his neighbours, this pugnacious propensity has been invariably recognised by those who have studied our national character. It reveals itself in

our historical favourites, in the popularity of the madcap Richard, Henry of Agincourt, the belligerent Chatham, and those monarchs and statesmen who have been most famous for their warlike achievements. It is displayed in our fondness for erecting monuments to warriors, even at the doors of our marts of commerce; in the frequent memorials of our battles, in the names of bridges, streets, and omnibuses; but above all in the display which public opinion tolerates in our metropolitan cathedral, whose walls are decorated with bas-reliefs of battle scenes, of storming of towns, and charges of bayonets, where horses and riders, ships, cannon and musketry, realise by turns, in a Christian temple, the fierce struggle of the siege and the battle-field. I have visited, I believe, all the great Christian temples in the capitals of Europe; but my memory fails me, if I saw anything to compare with it. Mr. Layard has brought us some very similar works of art from Nineveh, but he has not informed us that they were found in Christian churches….

Will you pardon me if, before I lay down my pen, I so far presume upon your forbearance as to express a doubt whether the eagerness with which the topic of the Duke of Wellington's career was so generally selected for pulpit manifestations was calculated to enhance the influence of ministers of the Gospel, or promote the interests of Christianity itself. Your case and that of public men are very dissimilar. The mere politician may plead the excuse if he yields to the excitement of the day that he lives and moves and has his being in the popular temper of the times. Flung as he is in the mid-current of passing events, he must swim with the stream or be left upon its banks, for few have the strength or courage to breast the rising wave of public feeling or passion. How different is your case! Set apart for the contemplation and promotion of eternal and unchanging feelings of benevolence, peace, and charity, public opinion would not only tolerate but applaud your abstinence from all displays where martial enthusiasm and hostile passions are called into activity. But a far higher sanction than public opinion is to be found for such a course. When the Master whom you especially serve, and whose example and precepts are the sole credentials of your faith, mingled in the affairs or this life, it was not to join in the exaltation of military genius, or share in the warlike triumphs of nation over nation, but to preach "Peace on EARTH and good will toward MEN." Can the humblest layman err, if, in addressing the loftiest dignitary of the Christian Church, he says "GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE?"

SOURCE

Richard Cobden, *The Political Writings of Richard Cobden, with a Preface by Lord Welby, Introductions by Sir Louis Mallet, C.B., and William Cullen Bryant, Notes by F.W. Chesson and a Bibliography*, vol. 2, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903). Chapter: LETTER III.: MR. COBDEN TO THE REVEREND — —.

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/231/39732/677680>

Quotation No. 51. The 8th Day of Christmas: Jefferson on the inevitability of revolution in England only after which there will be peace on earth (1817)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/417>]
[Date published: 1 January, 2013]

Thomas Jefferson (1743 – 1826)

About this Quotation:

This quotation is part of a series for "The Twelve Days of Christmas" on the theme of "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men." [Luke 2:14]

In the economic depression which followed the ending of hostilities against Napoleon in 1815 Jefferson was convinced that the bankrupt British government was ripe for revolution. It had undertaken all manner of "follies & frauds" which had lead to massive national debt and high taxation which were squandered in "fomenting and paying the wars of the world." Jefferson likened the warlike British state to the frog in Aesop's fable of the frog and the ox, in which the arrogant frog blew itself up in order to become as big as the ox. The British system of war, empire, and national debt was now so large that "their bloated system has burst" and the oppressed English people would soon seek a solution to their problems in abolishing their government of "kings, lords, & borough-commons." Only with a more moderate and cheaper republican government could the English people "enjoy the fruits of their own labors in peace" and live in peace with the rest of the world. Jefferson also amusingly speculates what might happen to the King of England and the Prince Regent after the English revolution. He fantasizes with some relish how the King might be exiled to Indostan (India) and the Prince Regent to Botany Bay in Australia, where "imbecility might be governed by imbecility, and vice by vice; all in suit." Jefferson concludes his letter with the hope that the whole world would pray for such a revolution in England so "that at length there may be 'on earth peace, and good will towards men'."

The Quotation

In the immediate aftermath of the end of the war against Napoleon Jefferson believed that the national debt and the serious economic recession in England would lead inevitably to the English people rising up and overthrowing their government as the Americans had done 40 years before. Only after this revolution had succeeded would the world finally be able to enjoy "on earth peace, and good will towards men":

"TO WILLIAM SAMPSON, Monticello, Jan. 26, 1817.

Dear Sir,

—I have read with great satisfaction the eloquent pamphlet you were so kind as to send me, and sympathise with every line of it. I was once a doubter whether the labor of the Cultivator, aided by the creative powers of the earth itself, would not produce more value than that of the manufacturer, alone and unassisted by the dead subject on which he acted? In other words, whether the more we could bring into

action of the energies of our boundless territory, in addition to the labor of our citizens, the more would not be our gain? But the inventions of latter times, by labor-saving machines, do as much now for the manufacturer, as the earth for the cultivator. Experience too has proved that mine was but half the question. The other half is whether Dollars & cents are to be weighed in the scale against real independence? The whole question then is solved; at least so far as respects our wants.

I much fear the effect on our infant establishments, of the policy avowed by Mr. Brougham, and quoted in the pamphlet. Individual British merchants may lose by the late immense importations; but British commerce & manufactures, in the mass, will gain by beating down the competition of ours, in our own markets against this policy, our protecting duties are as nothing, our patriotism less. **I turn, however, with some confidence to a different auxiliary, a revolution in England, now, I believe unavoidable. The crisis so long expected, inevitable as death, altho' uncertain like that in it's date, is at length arrived. Their government has acted over again the fable of the frog and the ox; and their bloated system has burst. They have spent the fee simple of the island in their inflated enterprises on the peace and happiness of the rest of mankind. Their debts have consequently accumulated by their follies & frauds, until the interest is equal to the aggregate rents of all the farms in their country. All these rents must go to pay interest, and nothing remains to carry on the government.** The possession alone of their lands is now in the nominal owner; the usufruct in the public creditors. Their people too taxed up to 14. or 15. out of 16. hours of daily labor, dying of hunger in the streets & fields. The survivors can see for themselves the alternative only of following them or of abolishing their present government of kings, lords, & borough-commons, and establishing one in some other form, which will let them live in peace with the world. It is not easy to foresee the details of such a revolution, but I should not wonder to see the deportation of their king to Indostan, and of their Prince Regent to Botany Bay. There, imbecility might be governed by imbecility, and vice by vice; all in suit. **Our wish for the good of the people of England, as well as for our own peace, should be that they may be able to form for themselves such a constitution & government as may permit them to enjoy the fruits of their own labors in peace, instead of squandering them in fomenting and paying the wars of the world. But during these struggles, their artists are to become soldiers. Their manufactures to cease, their commerce sink and our intercourse with them be suspended. This interval of suspension may revive and fix our manufactures, wean us from British aperies, and give us a national & independent character of our own. I cannot say that all this will be, but that it may be; and it ought to be supplicated from heaven by the prayers of the whole world that at length there may be "on earth peace, and good will towards men." No country, more than your native one, ought to pray & be prepared for this. I wish them success, and to yourself health and prosperity."**

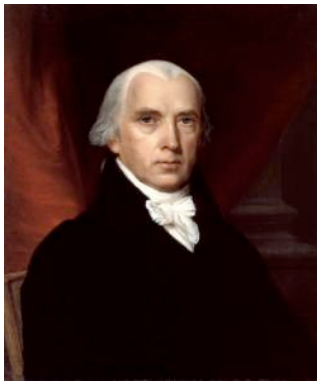
SOURCE

Thomas Jefferson, *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Federal Edition (New York and London, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904-5). Vol. 12. Chapter: *TO WILLIAM SAMPSON*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/808/88355/2009651>

Quotation No. 50. The 7th Day of Christmas: Madison on "the most noble of all ambitions" which a government can have, of promoting peace on earth (1816)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/418>]
[Date published: 31 December, 2012]



James Madison (1751 – 1836)

About this Quotation:

In this address to the Senate and the House of Representatives which President James Madison gave in December 1816 as his second term in office was coming to an end (1809-1817), he surveys the achievements of the young republic. About half of the things he lists are internal ones to do with the operation of the federal system, national elections, freedom of speech, trial by jury, and so on. The other half deals with war and foreign affairs and of these Madison was very proud, going so far as to say that thinking about them would "sweeten the remnant of my days." He mentions specifically the policy of not interfering in the affairs of other nations, treating other nations justly, and influencing other nations only by means of "appeals to reason and by its (the government's) liberal examples." These were the best ways Madison could imagine of "diminish(ing) the frequency or circumscrib(ing) the calamities of war." In fact, he believed that "the most noble of all ambitions" any government could have was to do what it could to "promot(e) peace on earth and good will to man."

The Quotation

In an address to the Senate and House of Representatives as his second term as President was drawing to a close, James Madison (1751-1836) summed up the achievements of the U.S. in the 40 years of its existence. One of the things he was most proud of was that he had led "a Government which avoids intrusions on the internal repose of other nations":

"Happily, I shall carry with me from the public theater other sources, which those who love their country most will best appreciate. I shall behold it blessed with tranquillity and prosperity at home and with peace and respect abroad. I can indulge the proud reflection that the American people have reached in safety and success their fortieth year as an independent nation; that for nearly an entire generation they have had experience of their present Constitution, the offspring of their undisturbed deliberations and of their free choice; that they have found it to bear the trials of adverse as well as prosperous circumstances; to contain in its combination of the federate and elective principles a reconcilement of public strength with individual liberty, of national power for the defense of national rights with a security against wars of injustice, of ambition, and of vainglory in the fundamental provision which subjects all questions of war to the will of the nation itself, which is to pay its costs and feel its calamities. Nor is it less a peculiar felicity of this Constitution, so dear to us all, that it is found to be capable, without losing its vital energies, of expanding itself over a spacious territory with the increase and expansion of the community for whose benefit it was established.

And may I not be allowed to add to this gratifying spectacle that I shall read in the character of the American people, in their devotion to true liberty and to the Constitution which is its palladium, sure presages that the destined career of my country will exhibit a Government pursuing the public good as its sole object, and regulating its means by the great principles consecrated in its charter, and by those moral principles to which they are so well allied; a Government which watches over the purity of elections, the freedom of speech and of the press, the trial by jury, and the equal interdict against encroachments and compacts between religion and the state; which maintains inviolably the maxims of public faith, the security of persons and property, and encourages in every authorized mode that general diffusion of knowledge which guarantees to public liberty its permanency and to those who possess the blessing the true enjoyment of it; **a Government which avoids intrusions on the internal repose of other nations, and repels them from its own; which does justice to all nations with a readiness equal to the firmness with which it requires justice from them; and which, whilst it refines its domestic code from every ingredient not congenial with the precepts of an enlightened age and the sentiments of a virtuous people, seeks by appeals to reason and by its liberal examples to infuse into the law which governs the civilized world a spirit which may diminish the frequency or circumscribe the calamities of war, and meliorate the social and beneficent relations of peace; a Government, in a word, whose conduct within and without may bespeak the most noble of all ambitions—that of promoting peace on earth and good will to man.**

These contemplations, sweetening the remnant of my days, will animate my prayers for the happiness of my beloved country, and a perpetuity of the institutions under which it is enjoyed."

SOURCE

James Madison, *The Writings of James Madison, comprising his Public Papers and his Private Correspondence, including his numerous letters and documents now for the first time printed,* ed. Gaillard Hunt (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900). Vol. 8. Chapter: *Fellow-Citizens of the Senate and of the House of Representatives.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1939/119212/2404005>

Quotation No. 49. The 4th Day of Christmas: Dante Alighieri on human perfectibility and peace on earth (1559)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/410>]
[Date published: 28 December, 2012]

Dante Alighieri (1265 – 1321)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

This quotation is part of a series for "The Twelve Days of Christmas" on the theme of "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men" [Luke 2:14]

It is curious to find an argument in a 16th century text in defence of monarchy these passages extolling peace as the best way human beings can achieve perfectibility in both thought and action. One would normally associate the idea of perfectibility with the 18th century enlightenment, most notably Condorcet, or the early 19th century with Wilhelm von Humboldt. Yet here Dante states that the quiet, calm, and tranquility provided by a state of peace allows the human race to "accomplish most freely and easily its given work" which is in the first instance intellectual or speculative in nature (thus literature or philosophy) and secondly by "extension" all other types of "action" in the physical world. One wonders if one might take this to mean all manner of economic activity including trade and exchange with others? Dante links these ideas to religion with the idea that this state of peace brings human beings closer to that of the angels where a situation of beatitude might be achieved as promised by the heavenly host at the birth of Christ. We include with this quotation the notes of the translator Aurelia Henry which provide a list of other passages from Dante's works where he discusses peace, suggesting that it was of great concern to him.

THE QUOTATION

The Florentine poet Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) believed in a universal monarch who would end the squabbling and bloodshed between rival kings and lords in Europe. Only under such a regime could peace be established under which humanity could thrive and prosper:

It has now been satisfactorily explained that the proper function of the human race, taken in the aggregate, is to actualize continually the entire capacity of the possible intellect, primarily in speculation, then, through its extension and for its sake, secondarily in action. And since it is true that whatever modifies a part modifies the whole, and that the individual man seated in quiet grows perfect in knowledge and wisdom, it is plain that amid the calm and tranquillity of peace the human race accomplishes most freely and easily its given work. How nearly divine this function is revealed in the words, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." Whence it is manifest that universal peace is the best of those things which are ordained for our beatitude. And hence to the shepherds sounded from on high the message not of riches, nor pleasures, nor honors, nor length of life, nor health, nor beauty; but the

message of peace. For the heavenly host said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." Likewise, "Peace be unto you" was the salutation of the Saviour of men. It befitted the supreme Saviour to utter the supreme salutation. It is evident to all that the disciples desired to preserve this custom; and Paul likewise in his words of greeting.

2. From these things which have been expounded we perceive through what better, nay, through what best means the human race may fulfill its proper office. Consequently we perceive the nearest way through which may be reached that universal peace toward which all our efforts are directed as their ultimate end, and which is to be assumed as the basic principle of subsequent reasoning. This principle was necessary, we have said, as a predetermined formula, into which, as into a most manifest truth, must be resolved all things needing to be proved. [footnote 7

[Editor's Note 7] Some of Dante's most eloquent exhortations in prose and some of the most perfect music of his verse are touching that peace which he knew should make man happy on earth and blessed in heaven, that peace which he went to seek "from world to world," and which he found at last in complete obedience to the will of God.

Purg. 3. 74: Virgil conjures the spirits "By that peace which I think is awaited by you all."

Purg. 5. 61: Dante here tells of "that peace, which makes me, following the feet of a guide thus fashioned, seek it from world to world."

Purg. 10. 34: "The angel that came on earth with the decree of the many years wept-for peace … opened Heaven from its long interdict."

Purg. 11. 7: "Let the peace of thy kingdom come to us."

Purg. 21. 13: "My brethren, God give you peace," is the greeting of Statius.

Purg. 28. 91: "The highest Good, which does only its own pleasure, made the man good and for good, and gave him this place for an earnest to him of eternal peace."

Purg. 30. 7: "That truthful folk … turned them to the car as to their peace."

Par. 2. 112: "Within the heaven of the divine peace revolves a body in whose virtue lies the being of all that is contained in it."

Par. 3. 85: "In His will is our peace."

Par. 27. 8: "A life complete of joy and peace."

Par. 30. 100: "Light is there on high, which makes visible the Creator to that creation which only in seeing Him has its peace."

Par. 31. 110: St. Bernard "in this world by contemplation tasted of that peace."

Par. 33. 1: "Virgin Mother … in thy womb was rekindled the Love, through whose warmth in the eternal peace this flower has thus sprung."

SOURCE

Dante Alighieri, *The De Monarchia of Dante Alighieri*, edited with translation and notes by Aurelia Henry (Boston and New York: Houghton, Miflin and Company, 1904). Chapter: *CHAPTER IV: To attain this end humanity requires universal peace.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/2196/203193/3341675>

Quotation No. 48. The 3rd Day of Christmas: Erasmus stands against war and for peace on earth (16th century)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/413>]
[Date published: 27 December, 2012]

Desiderius Erasmus (1466 – 1536)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

This quotation is part of a series for "The Twelve Days of Christmas" on the theme of "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men" [Luke 2:14]

In three major works Erasmus presents a devastating critique of war, especially when waged by Christians. There is the standard denunciation of the impact war has has on ordinary working people, "the poor, the unoffending common people", whose lives and property are destroyed by the armies led by aristocrats, mercenaries and even bishops of the church. To Erasmus, all war was a form of fratricide with fellow humans killing each other, but it was doubly fratricidal when fellow Christians killed each other, or what he called "this fit of insanity". When Christian killed Christian he believed this violated Christ's "own peculiar law", the law of love or charity. Even when a military leader like King David fought wars "against the wicked, and at the command of God" he ended up with blood on his hands and was thus "a sanguinary prince" and therefore not invited to build God's temple. He reminds his readers that at the birth of Christ "the angels sung not the glories of war, nor a song of triumph, but a hymn of peace." In the Europe of his own day the people were "satiated with everlasting wars" and it was now time to "indulge at length a longing after peace."

THE QUOTATION

In his polemic against war (date?) the Dutch humanist scholar and theologian Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) denounces war for its destructiveness and its violation of fundamental Christian doctrine. He reminds Christians that at the birth of Christ "the angels sung not the glories of war, nor a song of triumph, but a hymn of peace":

"ANTIPOLEMUS; or, the PLEA OF REASON, RELIGION, AND HUMANITY, AGAINST WAR.

If there is in the affairs of mortal men any one thing which it is proper uniformly to explode; which it is incumbent on every man, by every lawful means, to avoid, to deprecate, to oppose, that one thing is doubtless war. There is nothing more unnaturally wicked, more productive of misery, more extensively destructive, more obstinate in mischief, more unworthy of man as formed by nature, much more of man professing Christianity.

Yet, wonderful to relate! in these times, war is every where rashly, and on the slightest pretext, undertaken; cruelly and savagely conducted, not only by unbelievers, but by Christians; not only by laymen, but by priests and bishops; not only by the young and inexperienced, but even by men far advanced in life, who must have seen and felt its dreadful consequences; not only by the lower order, the rude rabble, fickle in their nature, but, above all, by princes, whose duty it is

to compose the rash passions of the unthinking multitude by superior wisdom and the force of reason. Nor are there ever wanting men learned in the law, and even divines, who are ready to furnish firebrands for the nefarious work, and to fan the latent sparks into a flame.

Whence it happens, that war is now considered so much a thing of course, that the wonder is, how any man can disapprove of it; so much sanctioned by authority and custom, that it is deemed impious, I had almost said heretical, to have borne testimony against a practice in its principle most profligate, and in its effects pregnant with every kind of calamity….

But grant that the heathens might be hurried into all this madness and folly by anger, by ambition, by avarice, by cruelty, or, which I am rather inclined to believe, by the furies sent from Hell for that very purpose; yet how could it ever enter into our hearts, that a Christian should imbrue his hands in the blood of a Christian! If a brother murder his brother, the crime is called fratricide: but a Christian is more closely allied to a Christian as such, then a brother by the ties of consanguinity; unless the bonds of nature are stronger than the bonds of Christ, which Christians, consistently with their faith, cannot allow. How absurd then is it, that they should be constantly at war with each other; who form but one family, the church of Christ; who are members of the same body; who boast of the same head, even Jesus Christ; who have one Father in Heaven, common to them all; who grow in grace by the same spirit; who are initiated in the same mysteries, redeemed by the same blood, regenerated at the same font, nourished by the same holy sacrament, militate under the same great Captain of Salvation, eat of the same bread, partake of the same cup, have one common enemy, the devil, and are all called to the same eternal inheritance?

Where are there so many and so sacred obligations to perfect concord as in the Christian religion? Where so numerous exhortations to peace? One law Jesus Christ claimed as his own peculiar law, and it was the law of love or charity. What practice among mankind violates this law so grossly as war? Christ salutes his votaries with the happy omen of peace. To his disciples he gives nothing but peace; he leaves them no other legacy but peace. In his holy prayers, the subject of his devout entreaty was principally, that, as he was one with the Father, so his disciples, that is to say, all Christians, might be one with him. This union is something more than peace, more than friendship, more than concord, it is an intimate communion with the Divine Nature….

Solomon was a type of Christ. But the word Solomon in Hebrew signifies the Pacific. Solomon, on this account, because he was pacific, was chosen to build the temple. David, though endeared by some virtues, was rejected as a builder of the temple, because he had stained his hands in blood, because he was a sanguinary prince, because, in a word, he was a warrior. He was rejected for this, though the wars he carried on were against the wicked, and at the command of God; and though he, who afterwards abrogated, in great measure, the laws of Moses, had not yet taught mankind that they ought to love their enemies.

At the nativity of Jesus Christ, the angels sung not the glories of war, nor a song of triumph, but a hymn of peace. "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; good-will towards men." The mystic poet and prophet foretold before his birth, Factus est in pace locus ejus." (And his place is in peace) …

[Editor's Note] Psalm 76:1-4 "Notus in Judæa Deus; in Israël magnum nomen ejus. Et factus est in pace locus ejus, et habitatio ejus in Sion. Ibi confregit potentias arcuum, scutum, gladium, et bellum." (In Judea God is known: his name is great in Israel. And his place is in peace: and his abode in Sion: There has he broken the powers of bows, the shield, the sword, and the battle.)"

SOURCE

Vicesimus Knox, *The Works of Vicesimus Knox, D.D. with a Biographical Preface.* In Seven Volumes (London: J. Mawman, 1824). Vol. 5. Chapter: *ANTIPOLEMUS; or, the PLEA OF REASON, RELIGION, AND HUMANITY, AGAINST WAR.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/630/210931/1942067>

Quotation No. 47. The 2nd Day of Christmas: Petrarch on the mercenary wars in Italy and the need for peace on earth (1344)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/415>]
[Date published: 26 December, 2012]

Francesco Petrarch (1304 – 1374)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

This quotation is part of a series for "The Twelve Days of Christmas" on the theme of "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men." [Luke 2:14]

In a long patriotic poem Petrarch bemoans the fate of Italy which had degenerated into endless civil wars fought often with mercenary troops. He calls upon "Italia mia" (my Italy) to end "this mad disgrace" where Italian fights against Italian thus indirectly serving the interests of the "Teutons" to the north who would like to see Italy politically weak and divided. He argues that the Italians have forgotten their noble Latin heritage and that their minds have been "steeped … in evil ways by old authority, truth's constant enemy." He urges them to cease "strife and slaughter" and to "consecrate your lives to a better fate, to deeds of generous worth, to gracious acts that cheer and bless mankind; thus will you gather joy and peace on earth." It should be noted that this translation was published in 1915 when Europe was being torn apart by another continent-wide civil war which became known as the "Great War."

THE QUOTATION

The Italian humanist poet Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374) was appalled at the use of mercenaries by the warring city states of Italy which ravaged his country in the 14th century. He urged his fellow Italians "from strife and slaughter cease" and instead "gather joy and peace on earth":

"[Italia mia.] Is not this precious earth my native land? And is not this the nest From which my tender wings were taught to fly? And is not this the soil upon whose breast, Loving and soft, faithful and true and fond, My father and my gentle mother lie? 'For love of God,' I cry, 'Some time take thought of your humanity And spare your people all their tears and grief! From you they seek relief Next after God. If in your eyes they see Some mark of sympathy, Against this mad disgrace They will arise, the combat will be short For the stern valour of our ancient race Is not yet dead in the Italian heart.'

Look! rulers proud! The hours are pressing on, And life steals fast away. Behold pale Death above your shoulders stand! Tho' now ye live, yet think of that last day When the soul, naked, trembling, and alone Shall come unto a dark and doubtful land; O, ere ye press the strand, Soften those furrowed brows of scorn and hate, (Those blasts that rage against the spirit's peace) From strife and slaughter cease, From hatching grievous ills, and consecrate Your lives to a better fate, To deeds of generous worth, To gracious acts that cheer and bless mankind; Thus will you gather joy and peace on earth And heaven's pathway opened wide will find.

Song, I admonish thee Thou speak thy speech with gentle courtesy, For thou among proud folk thy path must find. Steeped is the human mind In evil ways by old authority, Truth's constant enemy. With the great-hearted few Thy fortune try. 'Who bids my terrors cease?' I ask, 'and which of you Upholds my cry "Return! O heaven-born peace"?'"

SOURCE

Francesco Petrarch, *Some Love Songs of Petrarch*, translated and annotated with a Biographical Introduction by William Dudley Foulke (Oxford University Press, 1915). Chapter: *INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHY.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1341/82422/1945530>

Quotation No. 46. The 1st Day of Christmas: Jan Huss' Christmas letters and his call for peace on earth (1412)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/414>]
[Date published: 25 December, 2012]

Jan Huss (1372 – 1415)

About this Quotation:

This quotation is part of a series for "The Twelve Days of Christmas" on the theme of "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men" [Luke 2:14]

We begin with two letters Hus wrote while in exile to his followers in Prague exactly 600 years ago. Jan Huss was excommunicated from the Catholic Church and forced to go into exile for his criticisms of the corruption which plagued it. Less than three years after these letters were written Huss was caught and burned at the stake for the crime of heresy. He refused to recant his views, was forced to wear a paper hat with the inscription "Haeresiarcha" (the leader of an heretical movement), was tied to a stake with a heavy metal chain around his throat, then burnt alive and his ashes scattered in the Rhine river. It is in the light of these appalling actions that one should read his letters urging his followers in Prague to heed the teachings of Luke that there will be "on earth peace to men of goodwill". Hus goes on to say in a most prophetic manner that "After His manner, therefore, I desire peace for you also, dear friends—peace to you from Him, that you may … love one another, ay, and your enemies —peace to you, that that you may peaceably hear His word—peace to you, that you may speak with discretion—peace to you, that you may know how how to be silent with advantage".

The Quotation

The Czech religious reformer Jan Huss (1372-1415) wrote two letters from exile to the people of Prague in celebration of Christmas in 1412. He emphasizes that Christ is the peacemaker and that his message was "peace be to you" (pax vobiscum):

XXII. To the People of Prague (December 25, 1412)

Dear friends, although I am now separated from you, because perchance I am unworthy to preach much to you, nevertheless the love which I bear towards you urges me to write at least some brief words to my loved ones.

Lo! dear friends, to-day, as it were, an angel is saying to the shepherds: I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all people. And suddenly a multitude of angels breaks into praise, saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill!

As you commemorate these things, dear friends, rejoice that to-day God is born a man, that there may be glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of goodwill. Rejoice that to-day the infinitely Mighty is born a child, that there may be glory to God in the highest, etc. Rejoice that to-day a Reconciler is born to reconcile man to God, that there may be glory to God in the highest, etc. Rejoice that to-day He is born to cleanse sinners from their sin, to deliver them from the devil's power, to save them from eternal

perdition, and to bring them to eternal joy, that there may be glory to God in the highest, etc. Rejoice with great joy that to-day is born unto us a King, to bestow in its fulness upon us the heavenly kingdom, a Bishop to grant His eternal benediction, a Father of the ages to come, to keep us as His children by His side for ever: yea, there is born a Brother beloved, a wise Master, a sure Leader, a just Judge, to the end that there may be glory to God in the highest, etc. Rejoice, ye wicked, that God is born as a Priest, Who hath granted to every penitent absolution from all sins, that there may be glory, etc. Rejoice that to-day the Bread of Angels—that is, God—is made the Bread of men, to revive1 the starving with His Body, that there may be peace among them, and on earth, etc. Rejoice that God immortal is born, that mortal man may live for ever. Rejoice that the rich Lord of the Universe lies in a manger, like a poor man, that he may make us rich. Rejoice, dearly beloved, that what the prophets prophesied has been fulfilled, that there may be glory to God in the highest, etc. Rejoice that there is born to us a Child all-powerful, and that a Son is given to us, all-wise and gracious, that there may be glory to God in the highest, etc. Oh, dear friends, ought there to be but a moderate rejoicing over these things? Nay, a mighty joy! Indeed, the angel saith: I bring you good tidings of great joy, for that there is born a Redeemer from all misery, a Saviour of sinners, a Governor of His faithful ones; there is born a Comforter of the sorrowful, and there is given to us the Son of God that we may have great joy, and that there may be glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of goodwill. May it please God, born this day, to grant to us this goodwill, this peace, and withal this joy!

XXIV. To the Same (Without date: January (?) 1413)

… Such, then, is the mercy that comes to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, Who grants you also peace. Our Master, the Peacemaker, taught His disciples to be peacemakers, so that, in whatsoever house they entered, they were to say: Peace be to you. When He rose from the dead and entered into the midst of them, He said: Peace be to you. When, too, He was minded to depart from them to His death, He said: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. After His manner, therefore, I desire peace for you also, dear friends—peace to you from Him, that you may live virtuous lives and overcome the devil, the world, and the flesh—peace to you from Him, that you may love one another, ay, and your enemies —peace to you, that that you may peaceably hear His word—peace to you, that you may speak with discretion—peace to you, that you may know how how to be silent with advantage. For he that hears in a humble spirit, doth not contend in a cause with malice; he that speaks with discretion, overcomes the contentious; he that keeps silence to good purpose, doth not quickly wound his conscience. For these reasons peace be unto you, grace and mercy—grace that preserves from sin; mercy that delivers from eternal fire and the peace of eternal repose in the eternal joy, which comes to all the faithful after this paltry life—from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, to whom be praise for ever and ever. Amen.

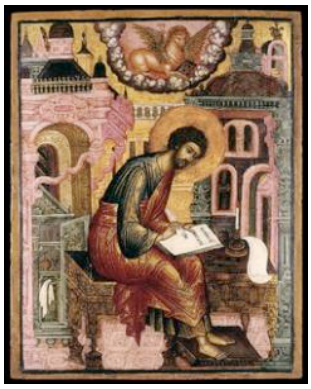
SOURCE

Jan Huss, *The Letters of John Hus.* With Introductions and Explanatory Notes by Herbert B. Workman and R. Martin Pope (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904).

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1994>

Quotation No. 45. The evangelist Luke "on earth peace, good will toward men" (1st century)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/409>]
[Date published: 24 December, 2012]



Saint Luke (1 AD – —)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

For "the twelve days of Christmas" of 2012 we have chosen 12 quotations from the OLL collection which deal with the exhortation of the heavenly host (a large army of good angels) described by the evangelist Luke that there be "on earth peace, good will toward men." Many Christians have taken this phrase to mean that there is a fundamental opposition to war which lies at the heart of Christianity. They have linked this statement with others which can be found in the Bible such as from Isaiah 2:3-4 which states "they (many people) shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." This is certainly the view of people like Desiderius Erasmus, Vicesimus Knox, and Richard Cobden. On the other hand there are other Christians who see the military allusions as more literal, such as Matthew 10: 34-35 "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law." Far from beating swords into ploughshares the sword becomes the symbol of militant Christianity. We have taken the former interpretation as the theme for our series of quotations.

THE QUOTATION

In the account by Luke of the birth of Christ there is a line which states that the angel which announced the birth was accompanied by a "heavenly host" (a large army of good angels) who urged that there be "peace on earth":

The Gospel According to S. Luke (KJV) 2: 1-14

1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

SOURCE

The Parallel Bible. The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments translated out of the Original Tongues: being the Authorised Version arranged in parallel columns with the Revised Version (Oxford University Press, 1885). The Gospel according to S. Luke. Chapter: *2*.

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1183/199873/3174557>

Quotation No. 44. Molinari on the elites who benefited from the State of War (1899)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/384>]
[Date published: 26 November, 2012]

Gustave de Molinari (1819 – 1912)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

As early of the late 1890s the French economist Gustave de Molinari (1819-1912) could see that the resurgence of tariffs, the arms race (especially the naval arms race), and the scramble for colonies in the third world was leading inevitably to a major conflict between the major European powers. He asked himself how this was possible given the enormous physical costs of modern warfare and the economic burdens it imposed on ordinary taxpayers. His sad conclusion was that bellicose policies benefited certain members of the governing class who were well organised, whereas the governed class who bore the burdens were "amorphous" and not well organised in the opposition. He identified a number of powerful groups in European societies who benefited from what he called "the State of War": the political elites who dominated the legislatures and controlled expenditure, the senior bureaucrats who administered government expenditure, the military elites who got to spend taxpayers money on new ships and artillery and who benefitted from promotions, the business elites whose factories produced the war materiel, and the officials who administered colonial policy in the occupied territories. Molinari concluded, perhaps somewhat wistfully, that this situation had to come to an end when the taxpayers and the producers realised the enormous expences they were forced to pay. Molinari died in 1912 two years before the outbreak of World War One showed how destructive modern wars would be.

THE QUOTATION

The French economist Gustave de Molinari (1819-1912) concluded in 1899 that wars would continue to be fought, in spite of their growing cost in terms of destruction wrought, lives lost, and high taxes, as long as powerful groups within society benefited personally from such a situation. To his mind, this meant the powerful political, bureaucratic, and military elites which controlled European societies at the end of the 19th century:

The fact that war has become useless is not, however, sufficient to secure its cessation. It is useless because it ceases to minister to the general and permanent benefit of the species, but it will not cease until it also becomes unprofitable, till it is so far from procuring benefit to those who practise it, that to go to war is synonymous with embracing a loss.

A consideration of modern wars from this aspect produces two opposite replies. **Every State includes a governing class and a governed class. The former is interested in the immediate multiplication of employments open to its members, whether these be harmful or useful to the State, and also desires to remunerate these officials at the best possible rate. But the majority of the nation, the governed class, pays for the officials, and its only desire is to support the least necessary number. A State of**

War, implying an unlimited power of disposition over the lives and goods of the majority, allows the governing class to increase State employments at will—that is, to increase its own sphere of employment. A considerable portion of this sphere is found in the destructive apparatus of the civilised State—an organism which grows with every advance in the power of the rivals. In time of peace the army supports a hierarchy of professional soldiers, whose career is highly esteemed, and is assured if not particularly remunerative. In time of war the soldier obtains an additional remuneration, more glory, and an increased hope of professional advancement, and these advantages more than compensate the risks which he is compelled to undergo. In this way a State of War continues to be profitable both to the governing class as a whole, and to those officials who administer and officer the army. Moreover, every industrial improvement increases this profit, for the enormous late increase in the wealth which nations derive from this source necessitates enlarged armaments, but also permits the imposition of heavier imposts.

But while the State of War has become more and more profitable to the class interested in the public services, it has become more burdensome and more injurious to the infinite majority which only consumes those services. In time of tranquillity it supports the burden of the armed peace, and the abuse, by the governing class, of the unlimited power of taxation necessitated by the State of War, intended to supply the means of national defence, but perverted to the profit of government and its dependents. The case of the governed is even worse in time of war. Whatever the issue of the struggle, and receiving none of the compensation afforded in previous ages, when a war ensured its safety from attack by the barbarian, it supports an immediate increase in the taxes, and a future and semi-permanent increase in the interest on loans, those inseparable accidents of modern war, and also the indirect losses which accompany the disorganisation of trade—injuries whose effects become more far-reaching with every extension in the time and area covered by modern commercial relations.

The human balance sheet under a State of War thus favours the governor at the expense of the governed, nor can the most cursory glance at the budgets of civilisation—especially if directed to their provisions for the service of National Debts—fail to perceive to which quarter, and in how large a degree, that balance inclines. This, in itself, affords no guarantee that the State of War is nearing an end, for the governing class, under present conditions, disposes of a far more formidable power than that immense, but, as we may call it, amorphous strength, which is dormant in the masses. They, as no one may deny, have often risen against governments extorting too high a price for their services, or threatening to overwhelm them with intolerable burdens, but the success of such movements seldom results in more than a change of masters, and the new governing class has usually been larger and of inferior quality. The result of these revolutions has been what it always must be—augmented burdens and a recrudescence of the State of War.

Nevertheless, this State of War must come to its inevitable conclusion. It continuously and, one may say, automatically drains the resources of the governed, and, since it is these resources which support the governing class, that class must eventually find itself face to face with the end. The same influences that maintain the State of War, though long since effete, will then close it, and humanity will enter a new and better period of existence, the period of Peace and Liberty. We have already attempted to sketch the political and economic organisation which will follow, built upon understanding of the motive forces and natural laws which govern human action. The difference between this organisation and the socialistic programme is singularly essential—it will observe, while theirs denies, these laws.

SOURCE

Gustave de Molinari, *The Society of Tomorrow: A Forecast of its Political and Economic Organization,* ed. Hodgson Pratt and Frederic Passy, trans. P.H. Lee Warner (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904). Chapter: *Part II: Chapter XV Summary and Conclusion.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/228/36940/1585595>

Quotation No. 43. John Bright calls British foreign policy "a gigantic system of (welfare) for the aristocracy" (1858)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/388>]
[Date published: 5 November, 2012]

John Bright (1811-1889)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

The anti-war and anti-empire British politician John Bright, along with his colleague Richard Cobden, suffered at the hands of the electorate for their opposition to Britain's involvement in the Crimean War (1854-56) against the Russian Empire. The nationalism of the moment led to Cobden's defeat at the election of 1857. Bright was able to hold his seat perhaps with the help of his great skills as an orator as exemplified in this speech from 1858 in which he reflects on the path Britain's foreign policy had taken after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 up to the Crimean War. His conclusion is that, as in so many areas, the ruling elites were able to dominate parliament in such a way as to make sure that taxpayer funded benefits and subsidies ended up in their pockets. In this case, he argued that the elites who controlled the army, the navy, and the foreign office were just so many "place-hunters" who sought and got secure, well-paying government jobs and contracts at the expense of the ordinary British taxpayers. He took every opportunity to bring these facts to the attention of the British people in public talks and speeches in parliament during his long political career which spanned the years from 1843 to 1889. He sadly concluded that things had not changed very much during this period since "men made no progress whatever, but went round and round like a squirrel in a cage" making the same mistakes over and over again.

THE QUOTATION

The British MP John Bright (1811-1889) gave a speech to his constituents in the Birmingham Town Hall on October 29, 1858 in which he asked who benefitted from Britain's foreign policy of constantly interfering in the affairs of other nations? His conclusion was that it served the needs of the "place-hunters", those members of the ruling elite who sought jobs for themselves, their families, and their friends. In other words, a form of welfare for the aristocracy:

"But, it may be asked, did nobody gain? If Europe is no better, and the people of England have been so much worse, who has benefited by the new system of foreign policy? What has been the fate of those who were enthroned at the Revolution, and whose supremacy has been for so long a period undisputed among us? Mr. Kinglake, the author of an interesting book on Eastern Travel, describing the habits of some acquaintances that he made in the Syrian Deserts, says that the jackals of the Desert follow their prey in families like the place-hunters of Europe. I will reverse, if you like, the comparison, and say that the great territorial families of England, which were enthroned at the Revolution, have followed their prey like the jackals of the Desert. Do you not observe at a glance that, from the time of William III, by reason of the foreign policy which I denounce, wars have been multiplied, taxes increased, loans made, and the sums of money which every year the Government has to expend augmented, and that so the patronage at the disposal of Ministers must have increased also, and the

families who were enthroned and made powerful in the legislation and administration of the country must have had the first pull at, and the largest profit out of, that patronage? **There is no actuary in existence who can calculate how much of the wealth, of the strength, of the supremacy of the territorial families of England has been derived from an unholy participation in the fruits of the industry of the people, which have been wrested from them by every device of taxation, and squandered in every conceivable crime of which a Government could possibly be guilty.**

The more you examine this matter the more you will come to the conclusion which I have arrived at, that this foreign policy, this regard for "the liberties of Europe," this care at one time for "the Protestant interests," this excessive love for the "balance of power," is neither more nor less than a gigantic system of out-door relief for the aristocracy of Great Britain. [Great laughter.] I observe that you receive that declaration as if it were some new and important discovery. In 1815, when the great war with France was ended, every Liberal in England, whose politics, whose hopes, and whose faith had not been crushed out of him by the tyranny of the time of that war, was fully aware of this, and openly admitted it, and up to 1832, and for some years afterwards, it was the fixed and undoubted creed of the great Liberal party. But somehow all is changed. We who stand upon the old landmarks, who walk in the old paths, who would conserve what is wise and prudent, are hustled and shoved about as if we were come to turn the world upside down. The change which has taken place seems to confirm the opinion of a lamented friend of mine, who, not having succeeded in all his hopes, thought that men made no progress whatever, but went round and round like a squirrel in a cage. The idea is now so general that it is our duty to meddle everywhere, that it really seems as if we had pushed the Tories from the field, expelling them by our competition."

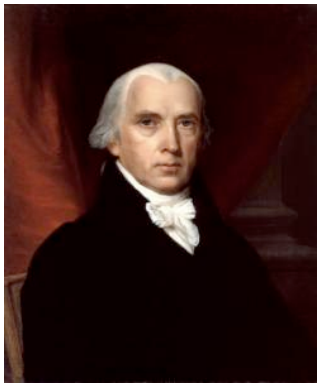
SOURCE

John Bright, *Selected Speeches of the Rt. Hon. John Bright M.P. On Public Questions*, introduction by Joseph Sturge (London: J.M. Dent and Co., 1907). Chapter: XVI: FOREIGN POLICY.

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1658/50309/1219545>

Quotation No. 42. James Madison on the necessity of separating the power of "the sword from the purse" (1793)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/396>]
[Date published: 10 September, 2012]



James Madison (1751 – 1836)

About this Quotation:

When war broke out between France and the monarchies of Europe in April 1792 the new American Republic faced a difficult choice between maintaining its alliance with France which had been of so much help during the American Revolution, and declaring its neutrality. A spirited debate ensued between "Pacificus" (Alexander Hamilton), who believed the President should be able to make or break treaties and declare and wage wars (much like traditional monarchs) without Congressional authorization, and "Helvidius" (James Madison), who argued that precisely because making treaties and declaring wars were "monarchical powers" they had been separated in the American republican constitution of 1787. Madison argued that a declaration of war meant in practice "repealing all the laws operating in a state of peace" and hence grossly overstepped the bounds of the "executive" function, namely "executing" the laws passed by Congress. Furthermore, he raised the "quis custodiet ipsos custodes" argument, i.e. "who will guard us from the guardians", if those who will wage the war also have the power to decide if and when to declare war.

The Quotation

In the debate between "Pacificius" (Hamilton) and "Helvidius" (Madison) on the proper powers of the executive (President) and legislative (Congress) branches of government Madison argued that the traditional "monarchical" powers of declaring and waging war had been separated in the American republic:

Helvidius No. 1 [August 24, 1793]

2. If we consult for a moment, the nature and operation of the two powers to declare war and make treaties, it will be impossible not to see that they can never fall within a proper definition of executive powers. The natural province of the executive magistrate is to execute laws, as that of the legislature is to make laws. All his acts therefore, properly executive, must presuppose the existence of the laws to be executed. A treaty is not an execution of laws: it does not pre-suppose the existence of laws. It is, on the contrary, to have itself the force of a law, and to be carried into execution, like all other laws, by the executive magistrate. To say then that the power of making treaties which are confessedly laws, belongs naturally to the department which is to execute laws, is to say, that the executive department naturally includes a legislative power. In theory, this is an absurdity—in practice a tyranny.

The power to declare war is subject to similar reasoning. **A declaration that there shall be war, is not an execution of laws: it does not suppose preexisting laws to be executed: it is not in any respect, an act merely executive. It is, on the contrary, one of the most deliberative acts that**

can be performed; and when performed, has the effect of repealing all the laws operating in a state of peace, so far as they are inconsistent with a state of war: and of enacting as a rule for the executive, a new code adapted to the relation between the society and its foreign enemy. In like manner a conclusion of peace annuls all the laws peculiar to a state of war, and revives the general laws incident to a state of peace….

3. It remains to be enquired whether there be any thing in the constitution itself which shews that the powers of making war and peace are considered as of an executive nature, and as comprehended within a general grant of executive power….

"The President shall be commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States, and of the militia when called into the actual service of the United States."

There can be no relation worth examining between this power and the general power of making treaties. And instead of being analogous to the power of declaring war, it affords a striking illustration of the incompatibility of the two powers in the same hands. **Those who are to conduct a war cannot in the nature of things, be proper or safe judges, whether a war ought to be commenced, continued, or concluded. They are barred from the latter functions by a great principle in free government, analogous to that which separates the sword from the purse, or the power of executing from the power of enacting laws.**

SOURCE

The Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793-1794: Toward the Completion of the American Founding, edited with and Introduction by Morton J. Frisch (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007). Chapter: *Helvidius Number I.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1910/112550/2335574>

Quotation No. 41. Sumner's vision of the American Republic was a parsimonious government which had little to do (1898)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/378>]
[Date published: 3 September, 2012]

William Graham Sumner (1840 – 1910)

About this Quotation:

The classical liberal American sociologist William Graham Sumner (1840-1910) penned two powerful essays between 1896 and 1898 to voice his opposition to the emergence of an American empire with the acquisition of Hawaii and the Philippines. His vision of a free and democratic American republic was rooted in an original notion of "American exceptionalism" which saw the founding of America as an opportunity to void the militarism and great power politics of Old Europe and to create a new society in which individuals would be free to pursue their own goals unrestricted by government regulation and taxation. In the 1890s he saw a new kind of exceptionalism emerging around him which was expansionist, aggressive, high taxing, and full of missionary zeal to "civilize" the less-developed world. He concluded that the ideals of Old Europe had won with the Spanish "moral" conquest of the United States in 1898.

The Quotation

In 1898 the American sociologist William Graham Sumner (1840-1910) had a vision of what a free, democratic, American Republic should be like: it should have no barons, no armies, no court and no pomp, no ribbons, no public debt, no grand diplomacy, no adventurous policies of conquest or ambition; but it should have a parsimonious government which had little to do:

> And yet this scheme of a republic which our fathers formed was a glorious dream which demands more than a word of respect and affection before it passes away. Indeed, it is not fair to call it a dream or even an ideal; it was a possibility which was within our reach if we had been wise enough to grasp and hold it. It was favored by our comparative isolation, or, at least, by our distance from other strong states. The men who came here were able to throw off all the trammels of tradition and established doctrine. They went out into a wilderness, it is true, but they took with them all the art, science, and literature which, up to that time, civilization had produced. They could not, it is true, strip their minds of the ideas which they had inherited, but in time, as they lived on in the new world, they sifted and selected these ideas, retaining what they chose. Of the old-world institutions also they selected and adopted what they chose and threw aside the rest. It was a grand opportunity to be thus able to strip off all the follies and errors which they had inherited, so far as they chose to do so. They had unlimited land with no feudal restrictions to hinder them in the use of it. Their idea was that they would never allow any of the social and political abuses of the old world to grow up here. **There should be no manors, no barons, no ranks, no prelates, no idle classes, no paupers, no disinherited ones except the vicious. There were to be no armies except a militia, which would have no functions but those of police. They would have no court and**

no pomp; no orders, or ribbons, or decorations, or titles. They would have no public debt. They repudiated with scorn the notion that a public debt is a public blessing; if debt was incurred in war it was to be paid in peace and not entailed on posterity. There was to be no grand diplomacy, because they intended to mind their own business and not be involved in any of the intrigues to which European statesmen were accustomed. There was to be no balance of power and no "reason of state" to cost the Life and happiness of citizens. The only part of the Monroe doctrine which is valid was their determination that the social and political systems of Europe should not be extended over any part of the American continent, lest people who were weaker than we should lose the opportunity which the new continent gave them to escape from those systems if they wanted to. Our fathers would have an economical government, even if grand people called it a parsimonious one, and taxes should be no greater than were absolutely necessary to pay for such a government. The citizen was to keep all the rest of his earnings and use them as he thought best for the happiness of himself and his family; he was, above all, to be insured peace and quiet while he pursued his honest industry and obeyed the laws. No adventurous policies of conquest or ambition, such as, in the belief of our fathers, kings and nobles had forced, for their own advantage, on European states, would ever be undertaken by a free democratic republic. Therefore the citizen here would never be forced to leave his family or to give his sons to shed blood for glory and to leave widows and orphans in misery for nothing. Justice and law were to reign in the midst of simplicity, and a government which had little to do was to offer little field for ambition. In a society where industry, frugality, and prudence were honored, it was believed that the vices of wealth would never flourish.

SOURCE

William Graham Sumner, *War and Other Essays,* ed. Albert Galloway Keller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919). Chapter: *XV: THE CONQUEST OF THE UNITED STATES BY SPAIN [1898].*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/345/225551/3705632>

Quotation No. 40. Sumner's vision of the American Republic as a confederation of free and peaceful industrial commonwealths (1898)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/379>]
[Date published: 13 August, 2012]

William Graham Sumner (1840 – 1910)

About this Quotation:

The classical liberal American sociologist William Graham Sumner (1840-1910) penned two powerful essays between 1896 and 1898 to voice his opposition to the emergence of an American empire with the acquisition of Hawaii and the Philippines. In his first essay on "The Fallacy of Territorial Extension" he expressed concern that the U.S. was rapidly adopting many of "the grand functions of European states" in the areas of building a great navy, engaging in complex diplomatic manoeuvering, treating conquered peoples as inferiors, and changing the way it dealt with its own people. Here as well as in his second essay on "The Conquest of the United States By Spain" (1898) he sadly concluded that his warnings were too late and that the trend of the future would only "lessen liberty and require discipline. It will increase taxation and all the pressure of government" on the American people.

The Quotation

In 1896 the American sociologist William Graham Sumner (1840-1910) had a vision of what a free, democratic, American Republic should be like: it would be "a confederation of free and peaceful industrial commonwealths" which would deliberately forgo many of "the grand functions of European states" which had made them militaristic and colonial powers:

This confederated state of ours was never planned for indefinite expansion or for an imperial policy. We boast of it a great deal, but we must know that its advantages are won at the cost of limitations, as is the case with most things in this world. The fathers of the Republic planned a confederation of free and peaceful industrial commonwealths, shielded by their geographical position from the jealousies, rivalries, and traditional policies of the Old World and bringing all the resources of civilization to bear for the domestic happiness of the population only. They meant to have no grand statecraft or "high politics," no "balance of power" or "reasons of state," which had cost the human race so much. They meant to offer no field for what Benjamin Franklin called the "pest of glory." It is the limitation of this scheme of the state that the state created under it must forego a great number of the grand functions of European states; especially that it contains no methods and apparatus of conquest, extension, domination, and imperialism. The plan of the fathers would have no controlling authority for us if it had been proved by experience that that plan was narrow, inadequate, and mistaken. Are we prepared to vote that it has proved so? For our territorial extension has reached limits which are complete for all purposes and leave no necessity for "rectification of boundaries." Any extension will open questions, not close them. Any

extension will not make us more secure where we are, but will force us to take new measures to secure our new acquisitions. The preservation of acquisitions will force us to reorganize our internal resources, so as to make it possible to prepare them in advance and to mobilize them with promptitude. This will lessen liberty and require discipline. It will increase taxation and all the pressure of government. It will divert the national energy from the provision of self-maintenance and comfort for the people, and will necessitate stronger and more elaborate governmental machinery. All this will be disastrous to republican institutions and to democracy. Moreover, all extension puts a new strain on the internal cohesion of the preexisting mass, threatening a new cleavage within. If we had never taken Texas and Northern Mexico we should never have had secession.

SOURCE

William Graham Sumner, *War and Other Essays*, ed. Albert Galloway Keller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919). Chapter: *XIV: THE FALLACY OF TERRITORIAL EXTENSION [1896].*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/345/225548/3705587>

Quotation No. 39. Cobden argues that the British Empire will inevitably suffer retribution for its violence and injustice (1853)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/363>]
[Date published: 2 April, 2012]

Richard Cobden (1804 – 1865)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

After the success of the Anti-Corn Law League in getting the Corn Laws repealed in 1846 Cobden became increasingly unpopular and isolated in the House of Commons because of his anti-war and anti-empire position. By the time war broke out in the Crimea against the Russian Empire in 1854 the British people had swung solidly behind the government on the issue of war and Cobden was to lose his seat in the Commons in 1857 as a result of his opposition. Typical of his anti-war rhetoric is this pamphlet he wrote in opposition to the Second Anglo-Burmese War in 1852 which saw the annexation of Burma. In a gloriously entitled piece called "How Wars are Got Up in India" Cobden shows why he became so reviled in the Commons: he held up a mirror to the face of the British people to show their naked self-interest and moral hypocrisy in supporting wars of colonial conquest and occupation.

THE QUOTATION

The free trader and anti-war advocate Richard Cobden (1804-1865) opposed the annexation of Burma in 1852. In a pamphlet written in 1853 he argued that like all previous empires, the British Empire will one day be punished for its " imperial crimes":

A war it can hardly be called. A rout, a massacre, or a visitation, would be a more appropriate term. A fleet of war-steamers and other vessels took up their position in the river, and on the 11th April, 1852, being Easter Sunday, they commenced operations by bombarding both the Rangoon and Dallah shores. Everything yielded like toywork beneath the terrible broad-sides of our ships. The Burmese had about as fair a chance of success in contending against our steamers, rockets, detonating shells, and heavy ordnance, of which they were destitute, as one of their Pegu ponies would have had in running a race with a locomotive. Whole armies were put to the rout, with scarcely the loss of a man on our side; and fortified places, when scaled by a few sailors or marines, were found entirely abandoned. There is neither honour nor glory to be gained when a highly civilised nation arrays the powers of mechanical and chemical science against a comparatively feeble, because ignorant and barbarous people. There is small room for the display of courage where there is little risk; and even muscular force has not much to do with a combat, the result of which depends almost entirely on the labours and discoveries of the workshop and laboratory. There is no doubt then as to the result of the Burmese war. Our troops may suffer from the climate, the water, or provisions; but the enemy has no power to prevent their subduing and annexing the whole or any part of the country. But success, however complete, will not obliterate one fact respecting the origin of the war….

Public opinion in this country has not hitherto been opposed to an extension of our dominion in the East. On the contrary, it is believed to be profitable to the nation, and all classes are ready to hail with approbation every fresh acquisition of territory, and to reward those conquerors who bring us home title-deeds, no matter, I fear, how obtained, to new Colonial possessions. So long as they are believed to be profitable, this spirit will prevail.

But it is not consistent with the supremacy of that moral law which mysteriously sways the fate of empires, as well as of individuals, that deeds of violence, fraud, and injustice, should be committed with permanent profit and advantage. If wrongs are perpetrated in the name, and by the authority, of this great country, by its proconsuls or naval commanders in distant quarters of the globe, it is not by throwing the flimsy veil of a "double government" over such transactions that we shall ultimately escape the penalty attaching to deeds for which we are really responsible. How, or when, the retribution will re-act upon us, I presume not to say. The rapine in Mexico and Peru was retaliated upon Spain in the ruin of her finances. In France, the razzias of Algeria were repaid by her own troops, in the massacres of the Boulevards, and the savage combats in the streets of Paris. Let us hope that the national conscience, which has before averted from England, by timely atonement and reparation, the punishment due for imperial crimes, will be roused ere it be too late from its lethargy, and put an end to the deeds of violence and injustice which have marked every step of our progress in India.

SOURCE

Richard Cobden, *The Political Writings of Richard Cobden, with a Preface by Lord Welby, Introductions by Sir Louis Mallet, C.B., and William Cullen Bryant, Notes by F.W. Chesson and a Bibliography, vol. 2,* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903). Chapter: *HOW WARS ARE GOT UP IN INDIA.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/231/39738/677881>

Quotation No. 38. John Bright on war as all the horrors, atrocities, crimes, and sufferings of which human nature on this globe is capable (1853)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/368>]
[Date published: 26 March, 2012]

name (date)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

John Bright, along with his fellow Member of Parliament Richard Cobden, were two of the most outspoken advocates of free trade and peace in mid-19th century Britain. They combined moral, political, and economic arguments into a powerful liberal critique of war and the classes who agitated for war and led the troops into battle. In this quotation, which is taken from a speech Bright gave to a peace conference, he attempts to counter the government propaganda for war which incessantly depicted the Russian Empire as barbarous, unchristian, and threatening to the British people. But the public clamor for war was so strong neither he nor Cobden could stop the march to a disastrous war. Cobden even lost his seat because of his principled opposition to interventionism. Bright argued that war could be summarized in the following sentence: war is "the combination and concentration of all the horrors, atrocities, crimes, and sufferings of which human nature on this globe is capable." As a Quaker he urged the British people not to treat their religion as "a romance" which they could toss aside whenever a popular war approached. Instead he urged that they adopt "sound economic principles", "a sense of justice," and the Christian principle that "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

THE QUOTATION

The British MP and peace advocate John Bright (1811-1889) gave a speech at the Conference of the Peace Society in Edinburgh in the summer of 1853 to oppose the forthcoming war against Russia (the Crimean War 1854-56). He reminded his listeners that many people who advocate war have never fought in one and that they forget that war inevitably brings with it the "concentration of all the horrors, atrocities, crimes, and sufferings of which human nature on this globe is capable":

What is war? I believe that half the people that talk about war have not the slightest idea of what it is. In a short sentence it may be summed up to be the combination and concentration of all the horrors, atrocities, crimes, and sufferings of which human nature on this globe is capable. … There is another question which comes home to my mind with a gravity and seriousness which I can scarcely hope to communicate to you. You who lived during the period from 1815 to 1822 may remember that this country was probably never in a more uneasy position. The sufferings of the working classes were beyond description, and the difficulties, and struggles, and bankruptcies of the middle classes were such as few persons have a just idea of. There was scarcely a year in which there was not an incipient insurrection in some parts of the country, arising from the sufferings which the working classes endured. You know very well that the Government of the day employed spies to create plots, and to get ignorant men to combine to take

unlawful oaths; and you know that in the town of Stirling, two men who, but for this diabolical agency, might have lived good and honest citizens, paid the penalty of their lives for their connection with unlawful combinations of this kind.

Well, if you go into war now you will have more banners to decorate your cathedrals and churches. Englishmen will fight now as well as they ever did, and there is ample power to back them, if the country can be but sufficiently excited and deluded. You may raise up great Generals. You may have another Wellington, and another Nelson too; for this country can grow men capable for every enterprise. Then there may be titles, and pensions, and marble monuments to eternize the men who have thus become great; but what becomes of you and your country, and your children? For there is more than this in store. That seven years to which I have referred was a period dangerous to the existence of Government in this country, for the whole substratum, the whole foundations of society were discontented, suffering intolerable evils, and hostile in the bitterest degree to the institutions and the Government of the country.

Precisely the same things will come again. Rely on it, that injustice of any kind, be it bad laws, or be it a bloody, unjust, and unnecessary war, of necessity creates perils to every institution in the country. If the Corn-law had continued, if it had been impossible, by peaceful agitation, to abolish it, the monarchy itself would not have survived the ruin and disaster that it must have wrought. And if you go into a war now, with a doubled population, with a vast commerce, with extended credit, and a wider diffusion of partial education among the people, let there ever come a time like the period between 1815 and 1822, when the whole basis of society is upheaving with a sense of intolerable suffering, I ask you, how many years' purchase would you give even for the venerable and mild monarchy under which you have the happiness to live? **I confess when I think of the tremendous perils into which unthinking men—men who do not intend to fight themselves—are willing to drag or to hurry this country, I am amazed how they can trifle with interests so vast, and consequences so much beyond their calculation.**

SOURCE

John Bright, *Selected Speeches of the Rt. Hon. John Bright M.P. On Public Questions*, introduction by Joseph Sturge (London: J.M. Dent and Co., 1907). Chapter: *XVII: PEACE.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1658/50311/1219585>

Quotation No. 37. Cobden on the complicity of the British people in supporting war (1852)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/352>]
[Date published: 25 December, 2011]

Richard Cobden (1804 – 1865)

About this Quotation:

In a letter to a member of the clergy written at Christmas time (probably in 1852) Cobden argues that the peace party cannot move forward in Britain until the commonly held delusion that Britain was a peace-loving nation was overcome. He reminds the reverend that before Clarkson and Wilberforce began their campaign against slavery the British people supported the existence of the slave trade and took great pride in its profitability. Only after a long period of agitation by the abolitionists were the British people shamed into opposing the trade. Similarly, the peace party in the 1850s had to get the British people to recognize that they had a "pugnacious propensity" to use the military throughout the world to enforce British interests and that they were too eager to erect statues and praise its military leaders "even at the doors of our marts of commerce" and " in our metropolitan cathedral". Cobden hoped that he could redirect the enormous energy of the British people away from supporting war and military budgets and towards "abating the spirit of war and correcting the numberless moral evils from which society is suffering".

The Quotation

The peace and free trade advocate Richard Cobden (1804-1865) believed that before the "peace party" in Britain could be successful it had to overcome the popular misconception the British people had that they were a "peace-loving nation":

But to rouse the conscience of the people in favour of peace, the whole truth must be told them of the part they have played in past wars. In every pursuit in which we embark, our energies carry us generally in advance of all competitors. How few of us care to remember that, during the first half of the last century, we carried on the slave-trade more extensively than all the world besides; that we made treaties for the exclusive supply of negroes; that ministers of state, and even royalty were not averse to profit by the traffic. But when Clarkson (to whom fame has not yet done justice) commenced his agitation against this vile commerce, he laid the sin at the door of the nation; he appealed to the conscience of the people, and made the whole community responsible for the crimes which the slave-traders were perpetrating with their connivance; and the eternal principles of truth and humanity, which are ever present in the breasts of men, however they may be for a time obscured, were not appealed to in vain. We are now, with our characteristic energy, first and foremost in preventing, by force, that traffic which our statesmen sought to monopolise a century ago.

It must be even so in the agitation of the peace party. They will never rouse the conscience of the people, so long as they allow them to indulge the comforting delusion that they have been a peace-loving nation. We have been the most combative and aggressive community that has existed since the days of the Roman dominion. Since the revolution of

1688 we have expended more than fifteen hundred millions of money upon wars, not one of which has been upon our own shores, or in defence of our hearths and homes. "For so it is," says a not unfriendly foreign critic, "other nations fight at or near their own territory: the English everywhere." From the time of old Froissart, who, when he found himself on the English coast, exclaimed that he was among a people who "loved war better than peace, and where strangers were well received," down to the day of our amiable and admiring visitor, the author of the Sketch Book, who, in his pleasant description of John Bull, has portrayed him as always fumbling for his cudgel whenever a quarrel arose among his neighbours, this pugnacious propensity has been invariably recognised by those who have studied our national character. It reveals itself in our historical favourites, in the popularity of the madcap Richard, Henry of Agincourt, the belligerent Chatham, and those monarchs and statesmen who have been most famous for their warlike achievements. It is displayed in our fondness for erecting monuments to warriors, even at the doors of our marts of commerce; in the frequent memorials of our battles, in the names of bridges, streets, and omnibuses; but above all in the display which public opinion tolerates in our metropolitan cathedral, whose walls are decorated with bas-reliefs of battle scenes, of storming of towns, and charges of bayonets, where horses and riders, ships, cannon and musketry, realise by turns, in a Christian temple, the fierce struggle of the siege and the battle-field. I have visited, I believe, all the great Christian temples in the capitals of Europe; but my memory fails me, if I saw anything to compare with it. Mr. Layard has brought us some very similar works of art from Nineveh, but he has not informed us that they were found in Christian churches.

Nor must we throw on the aristocracy the entire blame of our wars. An aristocracy never governs a people by opposing their ruling instincts. In Athens a lively and elegant fancy was gratified with the beautiful in art. In Genoa and Venice, where the population were at first without territory, and consequently where commerce was the only resource, the path to power was on the deck of their merchantmen or on 'Change. In England, where a people possessing a powerful physical organisation and an unequalled energy of character were ready for projects of daring and enterprise, an aristocracy perverted these qualities to a century of constantly recurring wars. The peace party of our day must endeavour to turn this very energy to good account in the same spirit in which Clarkson turned a nation of man-stealers into a society of determined abolitionists. Far from wishing to destroy the energy, or even the combativeness which has made us such fit instruments for the battle-field, we shall require these qualities for abating the spirit of war and correcting the numberless moral evils from which society is suffering. Are not our people uneducated—juvenile delinquents uncared for? Does not drunkenness still reel through our streets? Have we not to battle with vice, crime, and their parent, ignorance, in every form? And may not even charity display as great energy and courage in saving life as was ever put forth in its destruction?

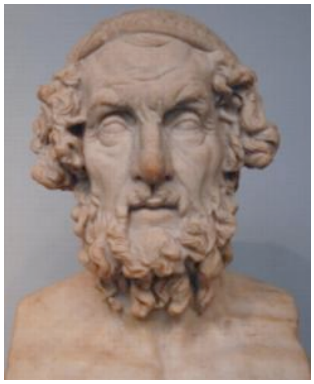
SOURCE

Richard Cobden, *The Political Writings of Richard Cobden, with a Preface by Lord Welby, Introductions by Sir Louis Mallet, C.B., and William Cullen Bryant, Notes by F.W. Chesson and a Bibliography, vol. 2,* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903). Chapter: *LETTER III.: MR. COBDEN TO THE REVEREND — —.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/231/39732/677676>

Quotation No. 36. The City of War and the City of Peace on Achilles' new shield (900 BC)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/342>]
[Date published: 28 November, 2011]



Homer (900 BC – 900 BC)

About this Quotation:

That Achilles would have a shield with two contradictory images on it, one showing a city at peace where conflicts are resolved by courts and another showing a city at war with all its vile consequences, might seem strange to the modern reader. It reminds me of the image on the poster for Stanley Kubrick's film *Full Metal Jacket* of the soldier's helmet with the handwritten "born to kill" slogan and a peace badge. Both images remind us that human beings have the capacity for both killing and peaceful trade and commerce.

The Quotation

In his fine translation of Homer's *Iliad*, Alexander Pope (1688-1744) describes the images which Vulcan carves on Achilles' new shield, which his mother Thetis has done to help Achilles recover from the news of his friend Patroclus' death. Vulcan depicts the two different types of cities which humans can build on earth; one based on peace and the rule of law; the other based on war, killing, and pillage:

Two cities radiant on the shield appear, The image one of peace, and one of war. Here sacred pomp and genial feast delight, And solemn dance, and Hymeneal rite; Along the street the new-made brides are led, With torches flaming, to the nuptial bed: The youthful dancers in a circle bound To the soft flute, and cittern's silver sound: Thro' the fair streets, the matrons in a row Stand in their porches, and enjoy the show.

There, in the Forum swarm a numerous train; The subject of debate, a townsman slain: One pleads the fine discharged, which one denied, And bade the public and the laws decide: The witness is produced on either hand: For this, or that, the partial people stand: Th' appointed heralds still the noisy bands, And form a ring, with sceptres in their hands; On seats of stone, within the sacred place, The rev'rend elders nodded o'er the case; Alternate, each th' attending sceptre took, And, rising solemn, each his sentence spoke. Two golden talents lay amidst, in sight, The prize of him who best adjudg'd the right.

Another part (a prospect diff'ring far) Glow'd with refulgent arms, and horrid war. Two mighty hosts a leaguer'd town embrace, And one would pillage, one would burn, the place. Meantime the townsmen, arm'd with silent care, A secret ambush on the foe prepare: Their wives, their children, and the watchful band Of trembling parents, on the turrets stand. They march, by Pallas and by Mars made bold; Gold were the Gods, their radiant garments gold, And gold their armour; these the squadron led, August, divine, superior by the head! A place for ambush fit they found, and stood Cover'd with shields, beside a silver flood. Two spies at distance lurk, and watchful seem If sheep or oxen seek the winding stream. Soon the white flocks proceeded o'er the plains, And steers slow-moving, and two shepherd

swains; Behind them, piping on their reeds, they go, Nor fear an ambush, nor suspect a foe. In arms the glitt'ring squadron rising round, Rush sudden; hills of slaughter heap the ground: Whole flocks and herds lie bleeding on the plains, And, all amidst them, dead, the shepherd swains! The bell'wing oxen the besiegers hear; They rise, take horse, approach, and meet the war; They fight, they fall, beside the silver flood; The waving silver seem'd to blush with blood. There tumult, there contention, stood confess'd; One rear'd a dagger at a captive's breast, One held a living foe, that freshly bled With new-made wounds; another dragg'd a dead; **Now here, now there, the carcasses they tore: Fate stalk'd amidst them, grim with human gore. And the whole war came out, and met the eye: And each bold figure seem'd to live, or die.**

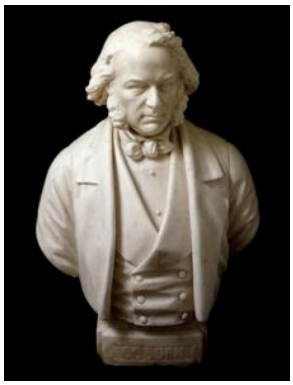
SOURCE

Alexander Pope, *The Complete Poetical Works of Alexander Pope.* Cambridge Edition, ed. Henry W. Boynton (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1903). Chapter: *BOOK XVIII: THE GRIEF OF ACHILLES, AND NEW ARMOUR MADE HIM BY VULCAN.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/2278/216099>

Quotation No. 35. Cobden on the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of other countries (1859)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/339>]
[Date published: 24 October, 2011]



Richard Cobden (1804 – 1865)

About this Quotation:

Richard Cobden believed in the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of others nations with a passion. This was partly a matter of principle, that all people had the right to choose the type of government which best suited them, even if this arrangement did not meet the approval of other states, especially large and more powerful states. He also believed in non-intervention for more practical reasons, because it was costly to the taxpayers of the intervening powers and that the military intervention destroyed the lives and property of those being occupied. Cobden could also see through the hypocrisy of the intervening powers which claimed they were trying to restore "order" when they themselves had either suffered from their own internal forms of disorder or created disorder in the countries they were intimidating or invading. He concluded with the firmest of statements that "there can be no peace in Europe … and no prospect of any abatement of those vast military efforts that prevent the people from enjoying the fruits of their industry, until you have the principle of non-intervention recognized as applicable to every small State as sacredly as to a large one." This quotation has been paired with a cartoon from the satirical magazine *Punch* from 1860 in which a school teacher, Madame Cobden, is teaching her young pupil, Emperor Napoleon III of France, how to spell "F.R.E.E. T.R.A.D.E." In the next lesson she will have to teach him another word to go with it, "N.O.N. I.N.T.E.R.V.E.N.T.I.O.N."

The Quotation

In 1859 while Richard Cobden (1804-1865) was visiting the U.S., France and Sardinia fought Austria in order to win independence for the Italian states. This prompted Codben to address his electorate in Rochdale upon his return. In the speech he strongly defended the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of other countries:

We have seen lately, and I have seen it with very great satisfaction—it was during my absence that it occurred—that the public voice of this country was raised in opposition to any interference by force of arms in the dreadful war which has raged on the Continent since I left England. I was glad to see that outburst of public opinion in this country in favour of non-intervention; and I congratulate you all, and I congratulate this country, that we have for the first time, almost, in our modern history, seen great armies march and great battles take place on the Continent without England having taken any part in the strife.

And now, shall we take stock just at the present moment—to use a homely but expressive phrase—shall we take stock, and ask ourselves whether all the old musty predictions and traditions of our diplomacy have been proved to be true on this occasion? They told us that if we did not mingle in European wars we should lose our prestige with the world; that we should become isolated; that we should lose our power. Well, now, I ask you, whilst the thing is fresh upon our memory and observation, have we lost prestige or power by having

abstained from the late war in Italy? On the contrary, do we not know that now the great Powers on the Continent, feeling that England is powerful,—more powerful than ever, in her neutrality,—are anxious, are clamorous, are most solicitous, that we should go and take a part in the peaceful conferences that are to take place with a view of securing peace?

Well, gentlemen, we have prevented intervention by force of arms. I say, let public opinion manifest itself, as I believe it has manifested itself, against any intervention by diplomacy, unless it can be upon principles and with objects of which England may be proud to approve; but **do not let us have any more Congresses of Vienna, where we are parties to treaties that partition off Europe, and apportion the people to different rulers, just with the same indifference to their wishes and their instincts as though they were mere flocks of sheep.** Now, I think Lord John Russell in the House of Commons laid down certain conditions, upon which alone the Government would be disposed to go into a Continental Congress, in order, if possible, to arrange and perpetuate the terms of peace; and he made conditions which I thought were good, though I think they are not very likely to be acted upon or accepted by the great Powers of the Continent. But what I wish now to express, and I am sure I cannot utter any words that will be more likely to express your sentiments; they are these—that **if England takes any part in the Congress that is to be held by the great Powers on the Continent, our object, and the sole condition on which they should go into that Congress, should be,—that the Italians should be left free to manage their own affairs; that they should be as secure from intervention—that they should enjoy the privilege of non-intervention in the management of their own affairs, just as entirely and as sacredly as the great Powers themselves. I know what is the excuse that is made by those great Powers for interfering in the affairs of Italy and the smaller States; they do it under the pretence of preserving order,—the hypocritical pretence, I have no hesitation in calling it. Do the great Powers preserve order themselves? Have we had perfect order reigning in the Austrian empire or in the French empire for the last twenty years? Do they preserve the earth from bloodshed? Have not those two great Powers, Austria and France, during the last six months, shed more blood in their mad quarrels than has been shed by all the smaller states of Europe for the last fifty years? And shall these great Powers, for the purpose of interfering, and sending their armed bands to coerce the free instincts of the people of Italy, be allowed to set up the pretence that they want to preserve order and prevent bloodshed? I will face the chance of disorder. I say that if the Italians cannot settle their own affairs without falling into discord, why should not they be allowed even to carry on civil and domestic tumult, or even war itself, without any other Power pretending to take the advantage and entering their territory?** How did we act in the case of France, when she fell into her almost red republic ten years ago? Was not our Government most eager at once to proclaim that, whatever happened in France, we would never interfere with her internal affairs, but would leave her free to choose any government she pleased?

Well, I say, that which you allow to the great Powers, allow to the smaller Powers; and I say this, not merely in the interest of those Powers themselves, but of humanity, for I say there can be no peace in Europe, there can be no chance of peace, and no prospect of any abatement of those vast military efforts that prevent the people from enjoying the fruits of their industry, until you have the principle of non-intervention recognised as applicable to every small State as sacredly as to a large one. I say, therefore, and I do not say wrongly when I express my conviction that I rightly interpret your views on the subject—I say that one condition, and almost the sole condition, on which our Government should be prepared to take any part in any Continental Congress with reference to the affairs of Italy, should be by laying down and insisting upon the fundamental maxim that Italy should manage her own affairs, without the interference, by force of arms, of Austria, or Russia, or any other Power whatever.

SOURCE

Richard Cobden, *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by Richard Cobden, M.P.,* ed. by John Bright and J.E. Thorold Rogers with a Preface and Appreciation by J.E. Thorold Rogers and an Appreciation by Goldwin Smith (London: T.Fisher Unwin, 1908). 2 volumes in 1. Vol. 2 War, Peace, and Reform. Chapter: *PARLIAMENTARY REFORM. IV. ROCHDALE, AUGUST 17, 1859.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/931/104920/2228955>

Quotation No. 34. Cobden urges the British Parliament not to be the "Don Quixotes of Europe" using military force to right the wrongs of the world (1854)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/322>]
[Date published: 26 September, 2011]

Richard Cobden (1804 – 1865)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

Cobden was a unique individual. He was a successful cotton manufacturer from the heartland of the dynamic British Industrial Revolution; he was a successful agitator for free trade whose Anti-Corn Law League pioneered the strategies used by modern single-issue causes (gathering signatures and petitions, mass meetings, organization membership cards); a Member of Parliament whose speeches for "peace", "retrenchment" (cutting the size and cost of government), and "reform" (reforming the corrupt and one-sided electoral representation of British politics) were a constant torn in the side of the British political establishment; and a strong advocate for peace and non-interference in the affairs of other countries. He lost his seat in Parliament because of his stance against the disastrous British involvement in the Crimean War, but he was able to return to politics when the war hysteria died down and eventually represented the British government in signing a significant free trade treaty with France - the aptly named Cobden-Chevalier Treaty of 1860.

THE QUOTATION

The British Member of Parliament Richard Cobden (1804-1865) urged the Commons not to intervene in the conflict between Russia and the Ottoman Empire (the Crimean War 1854-56) as it was not Britain's job to be the "Don Quixote of Europe" who would ride around the world righting all the wrongs it could see around it:

HOUSE OF COMMONS, DECEMBER 22, 1854.

I entirely concur with the noble Lord in his view of the interest which Austria and Prussia have in this quarrel, and what I want to ask is this—Why should we seek greater guarantees and stricter engagements from Russia than those with which Austria and Prussia are content? They lie on the frontier of this great empire, and they have more to fear from its power than we can have; no Russian invasion can touch us until it has passed over them; and is it likely, if we fear, as we say we do, that Western Europe will be overrun by Russian barbarism—is it likely, I say, that since Austria and Prussia will be the first to suffer, they will not be as sensible to that danger as we can be? Ought we not rather to take it as a proof that we have somewhat exaggerated the danger which threatens Western Europe, when we find that Austria and Prussia are not so alarmed at it as we are? They are not greatly concerned about the danger, I think, or else they would join with England and France in a great battle to push it back. If, then, Austria and Prussia are ready to accept these proposals, why should not we be? Do you suppose that, if Russia really meditated an attack upon Germany—that if she had an idea of annexing the smallest portion of German territory, with only

100,000 inhabitants of Teutonic blood, all Germany would not be united as one man to resist her? Is there not a strong national feeling in that Germanic race?—are they not nearly 40,000,000 in number?—are they not the most intelligent, the most instructed, and have they not proved themselves the most patriotic people in Europe? And if they are not dissatisfied, why should we stand out for better conditions, and why should we make greater efforts and greater sacrifices to obtain peace than they? I may be told, that the people and the Government of Germany are not quite in harmony on these points. [Cheers.] Hon. Gentlemen who cheer, ought to be cautious, I think, how they assume that Governments do not represent their people. How would you like the United States to accept that doctrine with regard to this country? But I venture to question the grounds upon which that opinion is formed. I have taken some little pains to ascertain the feeling of the people in Germany on this war, and I believe that if you were to poll the population of Prussia—which is the brain of Germany—whilst nineteen-twentieths would say that in this quarrel England is right and Russia wrong; nay, whilst they would say they wished success to England as against Russia, yet, on the contrary, if you were to poll the same population as to whether they would join England with an army to fight against Russia, I believe, from all I have heard, that nineteen-twentieths would support their King in his present pacific policy.

But I want to know what is the advantage of having the vote of a people like that in your favour, if they are not inclined to join you in action? There is, indeed, a wide distinction between the existence of a certain opinion in the minds of a people and a determination to go to war in support of that opinion. I think we were rather too precipitate in transferring our opinion into acts; that we rushed to arms with too much rapidity; and that if we had abstained from war, continuing to occupy the same ground as Austria and Prussia, the result would have been, that Russia would have left the Principalities, and have crossed the Pruth; and that, without a single shot being fired, you would have accomplished the object for which you have gone to war. **But what are the grounds on which we are to continue this war, when the Germans have acquiesced in the proposals of peace which have been made? Is it that war is a luxury? Is it that we are fighting—to use a cant phrase of Mr. Pitt's time—to secure indemnity for the past, and security for the future? Are we to be the Don Quixotes of Europe, to go about fighting for every cause where we find that some one has been wronged? In most quarrels there is generally a little wrong on both sides; and, if we make up our minds always to interfere when any one is being wronged, I do not see always how we are to choose between the two sides. It will not do always to assume that the weaker party is in the right, for little States, like little individuals, are often very quarrelsome, presuming on their weakness, and not unfrequently abusing the forbearance which their weakness procures them.** But the question is, on what ground of honour or interest are we to continue to carry on this war, when we may have peace upon conditions which are satisfactory to the great countries of Europe who are near neighbours of this formidable Power? There is neither honour nor interest forfeited, I think, in accepting these terms, because we have already accomplished the object for which it was said this war was begun.

SOURCE

Richard Cobden, *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by Richard Cobden, M.P.,* ed. by John Bright and J.E. Thorold Rogers with a Preface and Appreciation by J.E. Thorold Rogers and an Appreciation by Goldwin Smith (London: T.Fisher Unwin, 1908). 2 volumes in 1. Vol. 2 War, Peace, and Reform. Chapter: *RUSSIAN WAR. I. HOUSE OF COMMONS, DECEMBER 22, 1854.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/931/104898/2228393>

Quotation No. 33. James Mill likens the expence and economic stagnation brought about by war to a "pestilential wind" which ravages the country (1808)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/323>]
[Date published: 29 August, 2011]

James Mill (1773 – 1836)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

In the war against Napoleon the British government acted like a "banker" to the monarchs of Europe who wanted his challenge to their political authority and system of government arrested. In order to achieve this the British government imposed a vast array of new taxes (which caricaturists like James Gillray graphically described). Napoleon in turn planned to weaken Britain economically by blockading British goods from the European market, the so-called "Continental Blockade" (1806-1814). By 1808, when James Mill wrote Commerce Defended, the high British taxes and government debt, and Napoleon's economic embargo had pushed the British economy into recession (what Mill called "the stationary condition"). Mill replied to critics like William Cobbett who argued that this was not such a serious problem as only agriculture was "productive" and that "commerce" was not (thus the embargo on foreign trade would not have serious consequences). Mill vigorously defended the contribution of commerce to national wealth creation and in a final section called "General Reflections" wrote one of the best criticism of the terrible economic impact of war on ordinary working people. He likened it to a "pestilential wind" which dried up national prosperity and to a "devouring fiend" which ate up the nation's savings.

THE QUOTATION

In 1808 when the war against Napoleon was in full swing the Scottish economist James Mill (1773-1836) denounced the economic impact that higher taxes and restrictions on foreign trade were having on the British people. He compared the ravages of war to a "pestilential wind" which shrivels up the national wealth and causes great poverty and hardship among ordinary working people:

The general expensiveness of government, of which complaints are so common, and so well founded, will not account for the fact. All governments constantly spend as much as ever the people will let them. An expensive government is a curse. Every farthing which is spent upon it, beyond the expence necessary for maintaining law and order, is so much dead loss to the nation, contributes so far to keep down the annual produce, and to diminish the happiness of the people. But where a nation is considerable, and its industry improved and productive, the mere expence of government, however prodigal, cannot bear a great proportion to the whole of the annual produce; and the general savings of all the individuals in the nation can hardly fail to surpass the expences of the court. A country therefore can hardly fail to improve, notwithstanding the ordinary expence even of a wasteful government; it will only improve more slowly than it would have done had the government been more economical. The people may be still prosperous and happy, though they might have been a little more

prosperous and happy, had the expence of the government been less.

To what baneful quarter, then, are we to look for the cause of the stagnation and misery which appear so general in human affairs? War! is the answer. There is no other cause. This is the pestilential wind which blasts the prosperity of nations. This is the devouring fiend which eats up the precious treasure of national economy, the foundation of national improvement, and of national happiness. Though the consumption even of a wasteful government cannot keep pace with the accumulation of individuals, the consumption of war can easily outstrip it. The savings of individuals, and more than the savings of individuals, are swallowed up by it. Not only is the progression of the country stopped, and all the miseries of the stationary condition are experienced, but inroads are almost always made upon that part of the annual produce which had been previously devoted to reproduction. The condition of the country therefore goes backwards; and in general it is only after the country is so exhausted that the expence of the war can hardly by any means be found, that it is ever put an end to. When the blessing of peace is restored, the country slowly recovers itself. But hardly has it gained its former prosperity when it is generally re-struck by the calamity of war, and compelled to measure back its steps. In this alternation between misery and the mere beginnings of prosperity, are nations for the most part, condemned to remain; the energies of human nature are exerted to no purpose; its beneficent laws are counteracted; and the happiness of society, which seems to be secured by such powerful provisions, like the water of Tantalus, is only allowed to approach the lip, that it may be immediately dashed away from it. The celebrated Vauban, the unrivalled engineer of Louis the 14th, whose profession made him locally acquainted with every part of his country, and who spoke the language of an honest observation, untainted by the prejudices of his education, or the course of his life, observed, Si la France est si misérable, ce n'est ni à l'intemperie de l'air, ni à la faute des peuples, ni à la stérilité des terres, qu'il faut I'attriboer; puisque l'air y est excellent, les habitans laborieux, adroits, pleins d'indnstrie et tres nombreux; mais aux guerres qui l'ont agitée depuis longtems et au defaut d'éeconomic que nous n'entendons pas assez.'

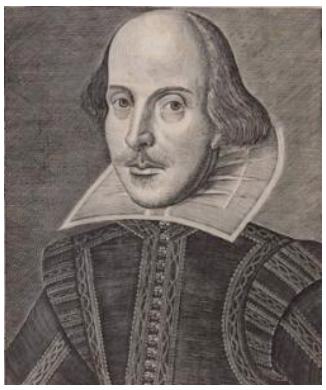
SOURCE

James Mill, *Commerce Defended. An Answer to the Arguments by which Mr. Spence, Mr. Cobbett, and Others, have attempted to Prove that Commerce is not a source of National Wealth* (London: C. and R. Baldwin, 1808). Chapter: *General Reflections.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1668/104768/2226147>

Quotation No. 32. The Duke of Burgundy asks the Kings of France and England why "gentle peace" should not be allowed to return France to its former prosperity (1599)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/324>]
[Date published: 22 August, 2011]



William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)

About this Quotation:

What William Shakespeare thought about war is hard to determine precisely. Many of his protagonists are kings or warriors and their behaviour on the battle field often has important consequences within the play. In Henry V (1599) Shakespeare has a number of rousing "patriotic" speeches such as Henry's famous "Once more into the breech" speech but counters these with anti-war speeches such as this one by the Duke of Burgundy. Here, Burgundy lists the deltrerious consequences war has had on the French countryside: the withering of the French "garden", crops left to rot on vine, fields left untended, the neglect of education and the study of science, and the savagery of the soldiers. At the end of the play the Chorus reminds the audience that all of Henry's military campaigns to control northern France were in vane, suggesting that Shakespeare may have had more of an Erasmian view of war than a Machiavellian one.

The Quotation

In *Henry V* Shakespeare (1564-1616) has the Duke of Burgundy make an impassioned speech to the Kings of France and England, whose war for control of northern France has so devastated the countryside, in which he asks them why "the naked, poor, and mangled Peace" should not be restored in order to "expel these inconveniences, And bless us with her former qualities":

My duty to you both, on equal love, Great Kings of France and England! That I have labour'd With all my wits, my pains, and strong endeavours, To bring your most imperial majesties Unto this bar and royal interview, Your mightiness on both parts best can witness. Since then my office hath so far prevail'd That face to face, and royal eye to eye, You have congreeted, let it not disgrace me If **I demand before this royal view, What rub or what impediment there is, Why that the naked, poor, and mangled Peace, Dear nurse of arts, plenties, and joyful births, Should not in this best garden of the world, Our fertile France, put up her lovely visage? Alas! she hath from France too long been chas'd, And all her husbandry doth lie on heaps, Corrupting in its own fertility.** Her vine, the merry cheerer of the heart, Unpruned dies; her hedges even-pleach'd, Like prisoners wildly overgrown with hair, Put forth disorder'd twigs; her fallow leas The darnel, hemlock and rank fumitory Doth root upon, while that the coulter rusts That should deracinate such savagery; The even mead, that erst brought sweetly forth The freckled cowslip, burnet, and green clover, Wanting the scythe, all uncorrected, rank, Conceives by idleness, and nothing teems But hateful docks, rough thistles, kecksies, burs, Losing both beauty

and utility; **And as our vineyards, fallows, meads, and hedges, Defective in their natures, grow to wildness, Even so our houses and ourselves and children Have lost, or do not learn for want of time, The sciences that should become our country, But grow like savages,—as soldiers will, That nothing do but meditate on blood,—** To swearing and stern looks, diffus'd attire, And every thing that seems unnatural. Which to reduce into our former favour You are assembled; and **my speech entreats That I may know the let why gentle Peace Should not expel these inconveniences, And bless us with her former qualities.**

SOURCE

William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (The Oxford Shakespeare),* ed. with a glossary by W.J. Craig M.A. (Oxford University Press, 1916). Chapter: *Scene II.—: Troyes in Champagne. An Apartment in theFrench King'sPalace.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1618/19392/1098376>

Quotation No. 31. Grotius on Moderation in Despoiling the Country of one's Enemies (1625)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/315>]
[Date published: 25 May, 2011]

Hugo Grotius (1583 – 1645)

About this Quotation:

The Dutch legal scholar Hugo Grotius believed that traditionally a conquering army had the right to claim possession of the territory they had conquered. However, he was mystified why, having gone to all the trouble of invading the enemy's country, the invading troops would then wantonly go about destroying that which they now "possessed" as their own. To him, this was both irrational and inhumane. Grotius penned these words in an attempt, as he called his 12th chapter in volume 3, for "moderation in regard to the spoiling the country of our enemies" as around him swirled the battles of the 30th Years War in Euope (1618-1648). We have paired the stark etchings of Jacques Callot (1592-1635) on the conflict in his native Lorraine with suitable quotations from Grotius' work in our collection of "Images of Liberty and Power."

The Quotation

While the 30 Years War was ravaging Europe the Dutch legal scholar Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) wrote *The Rights of War and Peace* (1625) which has become a foundation stone of modern thinking concerning the laws of war. In a chapter on "moderation in despoiling the country of one's enemies" he reflects on the folly of destroying that which one had striven so hard to acquire by means of violence:

III. 1. This will likewise happen, where the Possession is yet in Dispute, if there be great Hopes of a speedy Victory, of which those Lands and Fruits will be the Reward. **Thus Alexander the Great, as Justin relates it, hindered his Soldiers from wasting Asia, declaring to them, that they should spare their own, and not destroy those Things, which they came to possess.** Thus Quintius, when Philip overrun Thessaly, wasting it with Fire and Sword, exhorted his Soldiers (as Plutarch informs us) to march thro' the Country, as if it were now entirely their own. Croesus advising Cyrus not to give up Lydia to be plundered by his Soldiers, tells him, You will not ruin my Cities, nor my Lands, they are no longer mine, they are now become yours, they will destroy what is yours.

2. **They who do otherwise, may apply to themselves the Words of Jocasta to Polynices in Seneca's Thebais.**

Patriam petendo perdis: Ut fiat tua, / Vis esse nullam: Quin tuae causae nocet / Ipsum hoc, quod armis uris infestis solum / Segetesque adultas sternis, & totos fugam / Edis per agros: Nemo sic vastat sua. / Quae corripi igne, quae meti gladio jubes, / Aliena credis.

[**You ruin your Country whilst you seek it; to make it yours / Its Being you destroy; it defeats your Claim / To level, thus in Arms, the ripen'd Harvest; / Is Fire and Sword, the Vengeance of an Enemy, / Applied to Spoil and Ravage what's ones own? / No, our deadliest Foes we thus afflict.**]

To the same Sense are the Words of Curtius, Whatsoever they did not waste, they owned to be their Enemies. Agreeable hereunto is that which Cicero, in his Letters to Atticus, says against the Design that Pompey had formed of taking his Country by Famine. Upon this Account Alexander the Isian blames Philip (in the 17th Book of Polybius) whose Words Livy has thus rendered: **Philip dared not engage in a fair Field-fight, nor come to a pitch'd Battle, but flying away burned and plundered Cities; so that the Conquered rendered useless to the Conquerors what should have been the Recompence of Victory. But the old Kings of Macedon did not use to do so, they used to come to a fair Engagement, to spare Cities as much as possible, that they might have the more wealthy Dominion. For it is not a strange Conduct, to make War in such a Manner, that at the same Time, we dispute the Possession of a Thing, we leave nothing for ourselves but War.**

SOURCE

Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, edited and with an Introduction by Richard Tuck, from the Edition by Jean Barbeyrac (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005). Vol. 3. Chapter: *CHAPTER XII: Concerning Moderation in regard to the spoiling the Country of our Enemies, and such other Things.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1427/121240/2445825>

Quotation No. 30. Sumner and the Conquest of the United States by Spain (1898)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/314>]
[Date published: 9 May, 2011]

William Graham Sumner (1840 – 1910)

About this Quotation:

As a sociologist Sumner was very interested in how societies were structured and how they changed over time. Some of his writings dealt with the issue of class such as "the forgotten man" who paid the taxes and endured government regulations, the so-called "proletariat" of the Marxists, and social class in general. In lectures like the one he gave on "The Conquest of the United States by Spain" he was concerned with how the republican institutions and ideals of the early United States were evolving gradually towards those of the great centralized monarchies of Europe. The Spanish-American War of 1898 he thought was a warning bell that "old world" practices had arrived in America, such as standing armies, pubic debt, "grand diplomacy" and "reason of state," and territorial acquisitions. He concluded, lest anyone question his patriotism that "(m)y patriotism is of the kind which is outraged by the notion that the United States never was a great nation until in a petty three months' campaign it knocked to pieces a poor, decrepit, bankrupt old state like Spain. To hold such an opinion as that is to abandon all American standards, to put shame and scorn on all that our ancestors tried to build up here, and to go over to the standards of which Spain is a representative."

The Quotation

In a lecture given in 1898 the American sociologist William Graham Sumner (1840-1910) noted that the U.S. was in danger of losing what made it different from the European imperial powers because of its actions in seizing Spain's colonies in the war of 1898. The U.S. might have defeated Spain in battle but, he argued, Spanish ideas of conquest and empire had conquered America in return:

During the last year the public has been familiarized with descriptions of Spain and of Spanish methods of doing things until the name of Spain has become a symbol for a certain well-defined set of notions and policies. On the other hand, the name of the United States has always been, for all of us, a symbol for a state of things, a set of ideas and traditions, a group of views about social and political affairs. Spain was the first, for a long time the greatest, of the modern imperialistic states. The United States, by its historical origin, its traditions, and its principles, is the chief representative of the revolt and reaction against that kind of a state. I intend to show that, by the line of action now proposed to us, which we call expansion and imperialism, we are throwing away some of the most important elements of the American symbol and are adopting some of the most important elements of the Spanish symbol. We have beaten Spain in a military conflict, but we are submitting to be conquered by her on the field

of ideas and policies. Expansionism and imperialism are nothing but the old philosophies of national prosperity which have brought Spain to where she now is. Those philosophies appeal to national vanity and national cupidity. They are seductive, especially upon the first view and the most superficial judgment, and therefore it cannot be denied that they are very strong for popular effect. They are delusions, and they will lead us to ruin unless we are hard-headed enough to resist them. In any case the year 1898 is a great landmark in the history of the United States. The consequences will not be all good or all bad, for such is not the nature of societal influences. They are always mixed of good and ill, and so it will be in this case. Fifty years from now the historian, looking back to 1898, will no doubt see, in the course which things will have taken, consequences of the proceedings of that year and of this present one which will not all be bad, but you will observe that that is not a justification for a happy-go-lucky policy; that does not affect our duty to-day in all that we do to seek wisdom and prudence and to determine our actions by the best judgment which we can form….

… And yet this scheme of a republic which our fathers formed was a glorious dream which demands more than a word of respect and affection before it passes away. Indeed, it is not fair to call it a dream or even an ideal; it was a possibility which was within our reach if we had been wise enough to grasp and hold it. It was favored by our comparative isolation, or, at least, by our distance from other strong states. The men who came here were able to throw off all the trammels of tradition and established doctrine. They went out into a wilderness, it is true, but they took with them all the art, science, and literature which, up to that time, civilization had produced. They could not, it is true, strip their minds of the ideas which they had inherited, but in time, as they lived on in the new world, they sifted and selected these ideas, retaining what they chose. Of the old-world institutions also they selected and adopted what they chose and threw aside the rest. It was a grand opportunity to be thus able to strip off all the follies and errors which they had inherited, so far as they chose to do so. They had unlimited land with no feudal restrictions to hinder them in the use of it. Their idea was that they would never allow any of the social and political abuses of the old world to grow up here. There should be no manors, no barons, no ranks, no prelates, no idle classes, no paupers, no disinherited ones except the vicious. There were to be no armies except a militia, which would have no functions but those of police. They would have no court and no pomp; no orders, or ribbons, or decorations, or titles. They would have no public debt. They repudiated with scorn the notion that a public debt is a public blessing; if debt was incurred in war it was to be paid in peace and not entailed on posterity. There was to be no grand diplomacy, because they intended to mind their own business and not be involved in any of the intrigues to which European statesmen were accustomed. There was to be no balance of power and no "reason of state" to cost the Life and happiness of citizens. The only part of the Monroe doctrine which is valid was their determination that the social and political systems of Europe should not be extended over any part of the American continent, lest people who were weaker than we should lose the opportunity which the new continent gave them to escape from those systems if they wanted to. Our fathers would have an economical government, even if grand people called it a parsimonious one, and taxes should be no greater than were absolutely necessary to pay for such a government. The citizen was to keep all the rest of his earnings and use them as he thought best for the happiness of himself and his family; he was, above all, to be insured peace and quiet while he pursued his honest industry and obeyed the laws. No adventurous policies of conquest or ambition, such as, in the belief of our fathers, kings and nobles had forced, for their own advantage, on European states, would ever be undertaken by a free democratic republic. Therefore the citizen here would never be forced to leave his family or to give his sons to shed blood for glory and to leave widows and orphans in misery for nothing. Justice and law were to reign in the midst of simplicity, and a government which had little to do was to offer little field for ambition. In a society where industry, frugality, and prudence were honored, it was believed that the vices of wealth would never flourish.

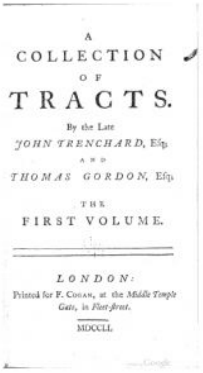
SOURCE

William Graham Sumner, *War and Other Essays*, ed. Albert Galloway Keller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919).

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/345/166277>

Quotation No. 29. John Trenchard on the dangers posed by a standing army (1698)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/292>]
[Date published: 13 September, 2010]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THOMAS GORDON, Esq;
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John Trenchard (1662 – 1723)

About this Quotation:

John Trenchard was well educated in Roman history and drew upon it repeatedly in his criticisms of the English state in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. He was particularly concerned with the issue of large, permanent armies ("standing armies") and how they had been used by generals and political leaders to intimidate the people and even to "enslave" them by means of a coup d'état. In the recent past Englishmen had seen Oliver Cromwell destroy the budding "Leveller" movement in the 1650s when he became the conqueror of Ireland and the self-styled "Protector" of England, Scotland, and Ireland; and then William of Orange who lead an invasion of England with his army in the "glorious" revolution of 1688. Trenchard notes that even if England had a "good prince" (perhaps like William of Orange) the temptation to use such power still remained and that the temptation would remain until the instrument itself had been removed permanently.

The Quotation

The radical Whig and Commonwealthman John Trenchard (1662-1723) wrote several tracts in the late 17th century warning his fellow countrymen of the dangers to liberty posed by a standing army. In this passage he argues that even if one has a "good Prince" as a ruler the very existence of such a powerful force is a temptation to use it to increase the state's power:

If the Prince of Orange in his Declaration, instead of telling us that we should be settled upon such a Foundation that there should be no Danger of our falling again into Slavery, and that he would send back all his Forces as soon as that was done, had promis'd us that after an eight Years War (which should leave us in Debt near twenty Millions) we should have a Standing Army established, a great many of which should be Foreigners, I believe few Men would have thought such a Revolution worth the Hazard of their Lives and Estates; but his mighty Soul was above such abject thoughts as these; his Declaration was his own, these paltry Designs are our Undertakers, who would shelter their own Oppressions under his Sacred Name.

I would willingly know whether the late King James could have enslaved us but by an Army, and whether there is any way of securing us from falling again into Slavery but by disbanding them. It was in that sense I understood his Majesty's Declaration, and therefore did early take up Arms for him, as I shall be always ready to do. It was this alone which made his assistance necessary to us, otherwise we had wanted none but the Hangman's.

I will venture to say, that if this Army does not make us Slaves, we are the only People upon Earth in such Circumstances that ever escaped it, with the 4th part of their number. It is a greater force than Alexander conquered the East with, than Cæsar had in his Conquest of Gaul, or

indeed the whole Roman Empire; double the number that any of our Ancestors ever invaded France with, Agesilaus the Persians, or Huniades and Scanderbeg the Turkish Empire; as many again as was in any battle between the Dutch and Spaniards in forty Years War, or betwixt the King and Parliament in England; four times as many as the Prince of Orange landed with in England; and in short, as many as have been on both sides in nine Battles of ten that were ever sought in the World. **If this Army does not enslave us, it is barely because we have a virtuous Prince that will not attempt it; and it is a most miserable thing to have no other Security for our Liberty, than the Will of a Man, though the most just Man living: For that is not a free Government where there is a good Prince (for even the most arbitrary Governments have had sometimes a Relaxation of their Miseries) but where it is so constituted, that no one can be a Tyrant if he would. Cicero says, though a Master does not tyrannize, yet it is a lamentable consideration that it is in his Power to do so; and therefore such a Power is to be trusted to none, which if it does not find a Tyrant, commonly makes one; and if not him, to be sure a Successor.**

If any one during the Reign of Charles the Second, when those that were called Whigs, with a noble Spirit of Liberty, both in the Parliament House and in private Companies, opposed a few Guards as Badges of Tyranny, a Destruction to our Constitution, and the Foundations of a Standing Army: I say, if any should have told them that a Deliverer should come and rescue them from the Oppressions under which they then laboured; that France by a tedious and consumptive War should be reduced to half the Power it then had; and even at that time they should not only be passive, but use their utmost Interest, and distort their Reason to find out Arguments for keeping up so vast an Army, and make the Abuses of which they had been all their lives complaining, Precedents to justify those Proceedings; whoever would have told them this, must have been very regardless of his Reputation, and been thought to have had a great deal of ill-nature, But the truth is, we have lived in an Age of Miracles, and there is nothing so extravagant that we may not expect to see, when surly Patriots grow servile Flatterers, old Commonwealthsmen declare for the Prerogative, and Admirals against the Fleet.

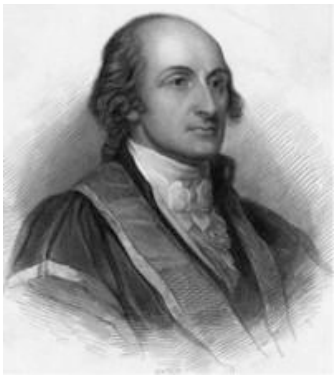
SOURCE

John Trenchard, *A Collection of Tracts. By the Late John Trenchard, Esq; and Thomas Gordon, Esq; The First Volume.* (London: F. Cogan, 1751). Chapter: *Trenchard: a short History of Standing Armies in England. Anno 1698.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/2315/220990/3537333>

Quotation No. 28. John Jay on the pretended as well as the just causes of war (1787)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/288>]
[Date published: 9 August, 2010]



John Jay (1745 – 1829)

About this Quotation:

Although John Jay distinguishes between the behavior of a democratic republic and that of an absolute monarch when it comes to provoking and starting wars one wonders if this distinction would be so clear in his mind if he were to observe the behaviour of some modern democracies. However, he make two interesting points which we need to consider: firstly, the gloomy notion that nations will make war whenever they think they will benefit from doing so and can get away with it. His second point is his distinction between just causes of war and "pretended" causes of war. A "humbler" foreign policy might avoid many of Jay's concerns about a nation "placing [itself] in such a situation as … to invite hostility or insult" and thus provide a pretended cause for starting a war.

The Quotation

One of the authors of the *Federalist Papers* and the first Chief Justice of the U.S., John Jay (1745-1829), warns about the dangers of a nation giving just cause to other nations for beginning hostilities, such as personal ambition and glory, revenge, or private benefit:

But the safety of the people of America against dangers from foreign force depends not only on their forbearing to give just causes for war to other nations, but also on their placing and continuing themselves in such a situation as not to invite hostility or insult; for it need not be observed, that there are pretended as well as just causes of war.

It is too true, however disgraceful it may be to human nature, that nations in general will make war whenever they have a prospect of getting anything by it; nay, that absolute monarchs will often make war when their nations are to get nothing by it, but for purposes and objects merely personal, such as a thirst for military glory, revenge for personal affronts, ambition, or private compacts to aggrandize or support their particular families or partisans. These, and a variety of motives, which affect only the mind of the Sovereign, often lead him to engage in wars not sanctified by justice, or the voice and interests of his people. But, independent of these inducements to war, which are more prevalent in absolute monarchies, but which well deserve our attention, there are others which affect nations as often as kings; and some of them will on examination be found to grow out of our relative situation and circumstances.

SOURCE

John Jay, *The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay*, ed. Henry P. Johnston, A.M. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1890-93). Vol. 3 (1782-1793). Chapter: *FEDERALIST PAPERS. NO. IV.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/2329/220477/3528507>

Quotation No. 27. Vicesimus Knox on how the aristocracy and the "spirit of despotism" use the commemoration of the war dead for their own aims (1795)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/279>]
[Date published:1 June, 2010]

Vicesimus Knox (1752 – 1821)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

Knox opposed the war the British monarchy fought against the new French Republic in the mid 1790s. He thought it enabled the "spirit of despotism" to take further root in Britain and weaken civil and individual liberties. A major part of his opposition was focused on the existence of standing armies, which was also of major concern to the Founding Fathers of the American Constitution. In this quotation he is taking aim at the habit of aristocrats of sumptuously decorating their family mausoleums with the symbols of their rule. As he noted "the walls of the sanctuary are hung with banners, escutcheons, helmets, and spurs; which display the emptiness of that preeminence which they are intended to emblazon." Knox particularly points out the glaring contrast between the tomb of the poet John Milton, who had "no monumental marble", and the aristocrats of his own day. In his view no "painting, gilding, and marble, (can) ennoble the greatest favourite of a court, the most successful adventurer in the East Indies, or the most opulent contractor and money-lender, like a Paradise Lost."

THE QUOTATION

The English minister Vicesimus Knox (1752-1821) condemned British aristocrats for pridefully decorating their graves with the symbols of their oppressive rule over the people. None was worse to his mind than their display of military prowess and conquest:

SECTION XL.: The Pride which produces the Spirit of Despotism conspicuous even on the Tombstone. It might be treated with total Neglect, if it did not tend to the Oppression of the Poor, and to Bloodshed and Plunder.

Standing armies are therefore the glory and delight of all who are actuated by the spirit of despotism. They would have no great objection to military government and martial law, while power is in their own hands, or in the hands of their patrons. The implicit submission of an army, the doctrine, which the military system favours, that men in subaltern stations are to act as they are bidden, and never to deliberate on the propriety of the command, is perfectly congenial with the spirit of despotism. The glitter, the pomp, the parade and ostentation of war are also highly pleasing to minds that prefer splendour and pageantry to solid and substantial comfort. The happiness, which must ever depend on the tranquillity of the people, is little regarded, when set in competition with the gratification of personal vanity. Plumes, lace, shining arms, and other habiliments of war, set off the person to great advantage; and as to the wretches who are slain or wounded, plunged into captivity and disease, in order to support this finery, are they not paid for it? Besides, they are, for the most part, in the lowest class, and those whom nobody knows.

Such is the love of standing armies, in some countries, that attempts are made to render even the national militia little different from a standing army. This circumstance alone is a symptom of the spirit of despotism. A militia of mercenary substitutes, under officers entirely devoted to a minister, must add greatly to a standing army, from which, in fact, it would differ only in name. Should the people be entirely disarmed, and scarcely a musket and bayonet in the country but under the management of a minister, through the agency of servile lords lieutenant and venal magistrates, what defence would remain, in extremities, either for the king or the people?

The love of pomp and finery, though ridiculous in itself, may thus become injurious to liberty, and therefore to happiness, by increasing the military order in the time of peace, and when ministerial arts have contributed to render that order devoted to purposes of selfish aggrandizement or borough influence. Minds capable of being captivated with the silly parade of war, are of too soft a texture to grasp the manly principles of true patriotism. They will usually prefer the favour of a court, which has many shining ornaments to bestow, to the esteem of a people. A heart deeply infected with the spirit of despotism, despises the people too much to be in the least solicitous to obtain popular applause. Praise is but breath; and often, like the wind, veers about inconstantly; and certainly will desert a man who has deserted the virtuous and benevolent conduct which first excited it. But ribands, stars, garters, places, pensions, usually last for life; and titles descend to the latest posterity. Honour, once gained by royal smiles, is a part of the family goods and chattels, and goes down, from generation to generation, without requiring, to the day of doom, any painful exertion, any meritorious services, but leaving its happy possessors to the free enjoyment of idleness and luxury. No wonder, therefore, that where the selfish spirit of despotism prevails, a bauble bestowed by a court shall outweigh a whole people's plaudits. A coat of arms makes a figure on the escutcheon and the tombstone; but not a scrap of gilded and painted silk—not even a bloody hand, can be bestowed by the most cordial esteem of the low multitude…

But both pride and folly should be permitted for me to enjoy their baubles unmolested, if they did not lead to cruelty. But pride and folly are the causes of war; therefore I hate them from my soul. They glory in destruction; and among the most frequent ornaments, even of our churches, (the very houses of peace,) are hung up on high trophies of war. Dead men (themselves subdued by the universal conqueror) are represented, by their surviving friends, as rejoicing, even in their graves, in the implements of manslaughter. Helmets, swords, and blood-stained flags hang over the grave, together with the escutcheons and marble monuments, emblematical of human ferocity; of those actions and passions which Christianity repudiates; for as well might oil and vinegar coalesce, as war and Christianity.

Spirit of despotism! I would laugh at all thy extravagances, thy solemn mummery, thy baby baubles, thy airs of insolence, thy finery and frippery, thy impotent insults over virtue, genius, and all personal merit, thy strutting, self-pleasing mien and language! I would consider them all with the eye of a Democritus, as affording a constant farce, an inexhaustible fund of merriment, did they not lead to the malevolent passions, which, in their effects, forge chains for men born free, plunder the poor of their property, and shed the blood of innocence.

SOURCE

Vicesimus Knox, *The Works of Vicesimus Knox, D.D. with a Biographical Preface.* In Seven Volumes (London: J. Mawman, 1824). Vol. 5. Chapter: *SECTION XL. The Pride which produces the Spirit of Despotism conspicuous even on the Tombstone. It might be treated with total Neglect, if it did not tend to the Oppression of the Poor, and to Bloodshed and Plunder.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/630/210926/1941948>

Quotation No. 26. Milton warns Parliament's general Fairfax that justice must break free from violence if "endless war" is to be avoided (1648)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/267>]
[Date published: 7 March, 2010]

John Milton (1608 – 1674)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

General Thomas Fairfax (1612-1671) was the head of the New Model Army which defended the interests of Parliament in the English Revolution against the supporters of the Stuart Monarchy. The Siege of Colchester took place in 1648 when the Republican Army defeated Royalist forces in the town of Colchester in Essex after a lengthy siege.

THE QUOTATION

John Milton (1608-1674) extolls the success of General Fairfax, the head of Parliament's New Model Army, in his war against the Royalists. However, Milton warns the general that war will only breed more war until "truth and right" are separated from the violence of war:

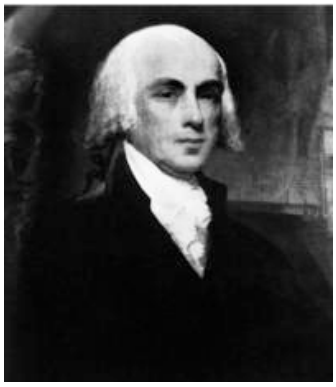
On the Lord Gen. Fairfax at the seige of Colchester.
Fairfax, whose name in armes through Europe rings
Filling each mouth with envy, or with praise,
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze,
And rumors loud, that daunt remotest kings,
Thy firm unshak'n vertue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions raise
Thir Hydra heads, & the fals North displaies
Her brok'n league, to impe their serpent wings,
O yet a nobler task awaites thy hand;
For what can Warr, but endless warr still breed,
Till Truth, & Right from Violence be freed,
And Public Faith cleard from the shamefull brand
Of Public Fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed
While Avarice, & Rapine share the land.

SOURCE

John Milton, *The Poetical Works of John Milton*, edited after the Original Texts by the Rev. H.C. Beeching M.A. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900). Chapter: *On the Lord Gen. Fairfax at the seige of Colchester.*
<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/556/85634>

Quotation No. 25. Madison argued that war is the major way by which the executive office increases its power, patronage, and taxing power (1793)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/236>]
[Date published: 30 November, 2009]



James Madison (1751 – 1836)

About this Quotation:

When the new American Republic was still very young, a debate ensued between James Madison and Alexander hamilton over the power claimed by President Washington to unilaterally issue the Neutrality Proclamation, thus changing American foreign policy without consulting congress. Madison strenuously objected and coined this wonderful metaphor about war being the "true nurse" of the growth of state power.

The Quotation

After President Washington issued the Neutrality Proclamation of 1793 a debate ensued between James Madison and Alexander Hamilton over the power of the President to declare war. Madison took the view that Washington had introduced dangerous new powers to the office of the president:

Every just view that can be taken of this subject, admonishes the public, of the necessity of a rigid adherence to the simple, the received and the fundamental doctrine of the constitution, that the power to declare war including the power of judging of the causes of war is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature: that the executive has no right, in any case to decide the question, whether there is or is not cause for declaring war: that the right of convening and informing Congress, whenever such a question seems to call for a decision, is all the right which the constitution has deemed requisite or proper: and that for such more than for any other contingency, this right was specially given to the executive.

In no part of the constitution is more wisdom to be found than in the clause which confides the question of war or peace to the legislature, and not to the executive department. Beside the objection to such a mixture of heterogeneous powers: the trust and the temptation would be too great for any one man: not such as nature may offer as the prodigy of many centuries, but such as may be expected in the ordinary successions of magistracy. War is in fact the true nurse of executive aggrandizement. In war a physical force is to be created, and it is the executive will which is to direct it. In war the public treasures are to be unlocked, and it is the executive hand which is to dispense them. In war the honors and emoluments of office are to be multiplied; and it is the executive patronage under which they are to be enjoyed. It is in war, finally, that laurels are to be gathered, and it is the executive brow they are to encircle. The strongest passions, and most dangerous weaknesses of the human breast; ambition, avarice, vanity, the honorable or venial love of fame, are all in conspiracy against the desire and duty of peace.

Hence it has grown into an axiom that the executive is the department of power most distinguished by its propensity to war: hence it is the practice of all states, in proportion as they are free, to disarm this propensity of its influence.

As the best praise then that can be pronounced on an executive magistrate, is, that he is the friend of peace; a praise that rises in its value, as there may be a known capacity to shine in war: so it must be one of the most sacred duties of a free people, to mark the first omen in the society, of principles that may stimulate the hopes of other magistrates of another propensity, to intrude into questions on which its gratification depends. If a free people be a wise people also, they will not forget that the danger of surprise can never be so great, as when the advocates for the prerogative of war, can sheathe it in a symbol of peace.

SOURCE

The Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793-1794: Toward the Completion of the American Founding, edited with and Introduction by Morton J. Frisch (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007). Chapter: *Helvidius Number IV.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1910/112553/2335686>

Quotation No. 24. Thomas Jefferson on the Draft as "the last of all oppressions" (1777)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/120>]
[Date published: 20 July, 2009]

Thomas Jefferson (1743 – 1826)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

Sometimes it comes down to the question of what is more important, the rights of individuals or the existence of the nation state? In this case, in the face of serious difficulties faced by the colonists in their war against the British Empire, Jefferson came down on the side of individual liberty. If it was tyranny to be conscripted under the monarchy, how would it be any different for the conscriptee if he were to be conscripted by another government in waiting? Jefferson concluded that, no matter the outward form of government, conscription is conscription and in any guise would be "the last of all oppressions." For many of them, those who died as a result, it would indeed be the "last" oppression they would ever suffer under.

THE QUOTATION

Even when the revolutionary war was not going well for the colonists, Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) reminded John Adams in a letter that the colonists would not stand for military conscription or the draft under any circumstances regarding it as "the last of all oppressions":

> To John Adams
> Williamsburgh, 16 May, 1777.

Matters in our part of the continent are too much in quiet to send you news from hence. **Our battalions for the continental service were some time ago so far filled as rendered the recommendation of a draught from the militia hardly requisite, and the more so as in this country it ever was the most unpopular and impracticable thing that could be attempted. Our people, even under the monarchical government, had learnt to consider it as the last of all oppressions.** I learn from our delegates that the confederation is again on the carpet, a great and a necessary work, but I fear almost desperate. The point of representation is what most alarms me, as I fear the great and small colonies are bitterly determined not to cede. Will you be so good as to collect the proposition I formerly made you in private, and try if you can work it into some good to save our union? It was, that any proposition might be negatived by the representatives of a majority of the people of America, or of a majority of the colonies of America. The former secures the larger, the latter, the smaller colonies. I have mentioned it to many here. The good whigs, I think, will so far cede their opinions for the sake of the Union, and others we care little for.

The journals of Congress not being printed earlier, gives more uneasiness than I would wish ever to see produced by any act of that body, from whom alone I know our salvation can proceed. In our Assembly, even the best affected think it an indignity to freemen to be voted away, life and fortune, in the dark. Our House have lately written for a manuscript copy of your journals, not meaning to desire a communication of

any thing ordered to be kept secret. I wish the regulation of the post-office, adopted by Congress last September, could be put in practice. It was for the travel night and day, and to go their several stages three times a week. The speedy and frequent communication of intelligence is really of great consequence. So many falsehoods have been propagated that nothing now is believed unless coming from Congress or camp. Our people, merely for want of intelligence which they may rely on, are become lethargic and insensible of the state they are in. Had you ever a leisure moment, I should ask a letter from you sometimes, directed to the care of Mr. Dick, Fredericksburgh; but having nothing to give in return, it would be a tax on your charity as well as your time. The esteem I have for you privately, as well as for your public importance, will always render assurances of your health and happiness agreeable. I am, dear sir, your friend and servant.

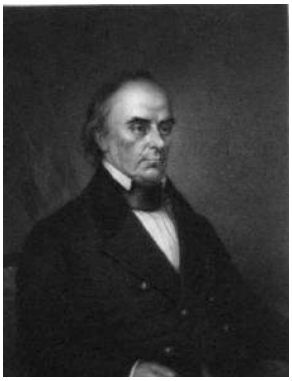
SOURCE

Thomas Jefferson, *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Federal Edition (New York and London, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904-5). Vol. 2. Chapter: *To John Adams.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/755/86103/1987600>

Quotation No. 23. Daniel Webster thunders that the introduction of conscription would be a violation of the constitution, an affront to individual liberty, and an act of unrivaled despotism (1814)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/205>]
[Date published: 25 May, 2009]



Daniel Webster (1782 – 1852)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

Now and again we come across a speech which prompts us to imagine being in the audience when it was delivered. Daniel Webster had a reputation for public speaking and this speech is one which gained him that deserved reputation. The last paragraph of this quotation is one we would have very much liked to have heard: "It is their task to raise arbitrary powers, by construction, out of a plain written charter of National Liberty. It is their pleasing duty to free us of the delusion, which we have fondly cherished, that we are the subjects of a mild, free, and limited government, and to demonstrate, by a regular chain of premises and conclusions, that government possesses over us a power more tyrannical, more arbitrary, more dangerous, more allied to blood and murder, more full of every form of mischief, more productive of every sort and degree of misery than has been exercised by any civilized government, with a single exception, in modern times." It is dripping with sarcasm which would have upset the supporters of the bill to a great degree. One wonders what government he is referring to with the phrase "single exception"? Perhaps France under Napoleon, or Britain when it was fighting the American revolutionary wars.

THE QUOTATION

Daniel Webster (1782-1852) gave a speech on the floor of the House of Representatives on December 9, 1814 in opposition to President Madison's proposal for compulsory military service in which he argued that Madison's plan to conscript individuals into the army was "an abominable doctrine (which) has no foundation in the Constitution":

Is this, sir, consistent with the character of a free government? Is this civil liberty? Is this the real character of our Constitution? No sir, indeed it is not. The Constitution is libelled, foully libelled. The people of this country have not established for themselves such a fabric of despotism. They have not purchased at a vast expense of their own treasure and their own blood a Magna Charta to be slaves. Where is it written in the Constitution, in what article or section is it contained, that you may take children from their parents, and parents from their children, and compel them to fight the battles of any war in which the folly or the wickedness of government may engage it? Under what concealment has this power lain hidden which now for the first time comes forth, with a tremendous and baleful aspect, to trample down and destroy the dearest rights of personal liberty? Who will show me any Constitutional injunction which makes it the duty of the American people to surrender

everything valuable in life, and even life itself, not when the safety of their country and its liberties may demand the sacrifice, but whenever the purposes of an ambitious and mischievous government may require it? Sir, I almost disdain to go to quotations and references to prove that such an abominable doctrine has no foundation in the Constitution of the country. It is enough to know that that instrument was intended as the basis of a free government, and that the power contended for is incompatible with any notion of personal liberty. An attempt to maintain this doctrine upon the provisions of the Constitution is an exercise of perverse ingenuity to extract slavery from the substance of a free government. It is an attempt to show, by proof and argument, that we ourselves are subjects of despotism, and that we have a right to chains and bondage, firmly secured to us and our children by the provisions of our government. It has been the labor of other men, at other times, to mitigate and reform the powers of government by construction; to support the rights of personal security by every species of favorable and benign interpretation, and thus to infuse a free spirit into governments not friendly in their general structure and formation to public liberty.

The supporters of the measures before us act on the opposite principle. It is their task to raise arbitrary powers, by construction, out of a plain written charter of National Liberty. It is their pleasing duty to free us of the delusion, which we have fondly cherished, that we are the subjects of a mild, free, and limited government, and to demonstrate, by a regular chain of premises and conclusions, that government possesses over us a power more tyrannical, more arbitrary, more dangerous, more allied to blood and murder, more full of every form of mischief, more productive of every sort and degree of misery than has been exercised by any civilized government, with a single exception, in modern times.

SOURCE

Daniel Webster, *Daniel Webster on the Draft: Text of a Speech delivered in Congress, December 9, 1814* (Washington, D.C.: American Union Against Militarism, 1917). Chapter: *II.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/2070/156303/2771630>

Quotation No. 22. Alexander Hamilton warns of the danger to civil society and liberty from a standing army since "the military state becomes elevated above the civil" (1787)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/192>]
[Date published: 29 December, 2008]

Alexander Hamilton (1757 – 1804)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

Hamilton taps into the 18th century well of thinking which was very hostile to the existence of a standing army. We have noted Thomas Gordon's writings on this in a previous quotation and his views were shared by many American colonists. The fear of course was directed at the British Empire. Hamilton comments on the institutional changes which would come about ("the military state") if war fighting became permanent: huge demands on government finance, the people becoming "broken to military subordination", frequent infringements on the peoples' rights, and the populace coming to regard the army not as the protectors but as their superiors. This brings us back to the perennial problem of "who guards us from those who were appointed to guard us?"

THE QUOTATION

In *Federalist Paper* no. 8 "The effects of Internal War in producing Standing Armies, and other institutions unfriendly to liberty" Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804) warned of the dangers to liberty when the importance of the military is elevated above that of the citizenry:

It may perhaps be asked, by way of objection, why did not standing armies spring up out of the contentions which so often distracted the ancient republics of Greece? Different answers equally satisfactory, may be given to this question. The industrious habits of the people of the present day, absorbed in the pursuits of gain, and devoted to the improvements of agriculture and commerce, are incompatible with the condition of a nation of soldiers, which was the true condition of the people of those republics. The means of revenue, which have been so greatly multiplied by the increase of gold and silver, and of the arts of industry, and the science of finance, which is the offspring of modern times, concurring with the habits of nations, have produced an entire revolution in the system of war, and have rendered disciplined armies, distinct from the body of the citizens, the inseparable companion of frequent hostility.

There is a wide difference also, between military establishments in a country which, by its situation, is seldom exposed to invasions, and in one which is often subject to them, and always apprehensive of them. The rulers of the former can have no good pretext, if they are even so inclined, to keep on foot armies so numerous as must of necessity be maintained in the latter. These armies being, in the first case, rarely, if at all, called into activity for interior defence, the people are in no danger of being broken to military subordination. The laws are not accustomed to relaxations, in favour of military exigencies; the civil state remains in full vigour, neither corrupted nor confounded with the principles or propensities of the

other state. The smallness of the army forbids competition with the natural strength of the community, and the citizens, not habituated to look up to the military power for protection, or to submit to its oppressions, neither love nor fear the soldiery: they view them with a spirit of jealous acquiescence in a necessary evil, and stand ready to resist a power which they suppose may be exerted to the prejudice of their rights.

The army under such circumstances, though it may usefully aid the magistrate to suppress a small faction, or an occasional mob, or insurrection, will be utterly incompetent to the purpose of enforcing encroachments against the united efforts of the great body of the people.

But in a country, where the perpetual menacings of danger oblige the government to be always prepared to repel it, her armies must be numerous enough for instant defence. The continual necessity for his services enhances the importance of the soldier, and proportionably degrades the condition of the citizen. The military state becomes elevated above the civil. The inhabitants of territories often the theatre of war, are unavoidably subjected to frequent infringements on their rights, which serve to weaken their sense of those rights; and by degrees, the people are brought to consider the soldiery not only as their protectors, but as their superiors. The transition from this disposition to that of considering them as masters, is neither remote nor difficult: but it is very difficult to prevail upon a people under such impressions, to make a bold, or effectual resistance, to usurpations supported by the military power.

The kingdom of Great Britain falls within the first description.

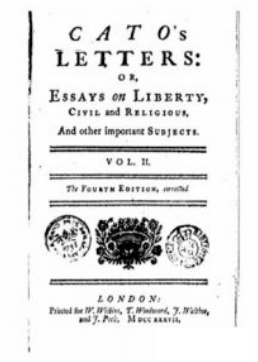
SOURCE

The Federalist (The Gideon Edition), Edited with an Introduction, Reader's Guide, Constitutional Cross-reference, Index, and Glossary by George W. Carey and James McClellan (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001). Chapter: *No. 8: The effects of Internal War in producing Standing Armies, and other institutions unfriendly to liberty.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/788/108573/2273680>

Quotation No. 21. John Trenchard identifies who will benefit from any new war "got up" in Italy: princes, courtiers, jobbers, and pensioners, but definitely not the ordinary taxpayer (1722)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/188>]
[Date published: 17 November, 2008]


CATO's
LETTERS:
OR,
ESSAYS ON LIBERTY,
CIVIL and RELIGIOUS,
And other important SUBJECTS.
VOL. II.
The FOURTH EDITION, corrected
LONDON:

John Trenchard (1662 – 1723)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

John Trenchard was a trenchant critic of the British Empire and the political and financial elites who benefited from it. A number of interesting points are made in this passage: there is the listing of those groups who stand to benefit from the additional revenues raised in order to fight a spurious war in Italy; the recommendation that Britain not be involved in this dispute but sit back and look for trading opportunities to emerge; and then there is the powerful "fire" metaphor with the great powers "kindling" a fire in Italy, the Princes who will "warm their hands" at the fire, while their subjects "will be burnt to death", with Trenchard urging Britain to stay well back so not to be "scorched" by the flames. The phrase "how wars are 'got up'" was chosen deliberately in order to evoke memories of a famous essay by Richard Cobden, the great English anti-war and free trade campaigner, called "How Wars are Got Up in India" (1852). Cobden makes similar arguments as Trenchard about the origins of wars, especially on the colonial frontier.

THE QUOTATION

John Trenchard (1662-1723), one of the author's of *Cato's Letters*, warned in 1722 that a new war with Italy would allow "many princes (to) warm their hands at it, whilst their subjects will be burnt to death," and reward many jobbers and courtiers who stood to personally benefit from increased taxes and debt:

I propose in this letter to shew, and I hope to do it unanswerably, that nothing can be a greater disservice to his Majesty's interest, more fatal to his ministry, or more destructive to his people, than to engage them in a new war, if there be but a bare possibility of preventing it, let the pretences be what they will. A new fire seems to be now kindling in Italy, which in all likelihood will blaze out far and wide; and, without doubt, many princes will warm their hands at it, whilst their subjects will be burnt to death: But I hope we shall have wit enough to keep out of its reach, and not be scorched with its flames; but, like some of our wiser neighbours, lie still, and know how to make our markets of the follies and misfortunes of others. We have been heroes long enough, and paid the price of our gallantry and credulity. We are got near sixty millions in debt, and have nothing for it but Gibraltar and Port Mahon; and it is said, that some of our allies have had the presumption to expect these from us too; and I am sure, if they should be lost, or given away, we have nothing left wherewith to compensate any powerwhich we shall vanquish hereafter…

But if such a war were ever so necessary, how shall it be supported? **We find by woeful experience, that three shillings in the pound has not maintained the current expence of the government, but we have run still in debt. The money given for the Civil List has not defrayed**

that charge, but new and large sums have been given to pay off the arrears; which, it is said, are not yet paid off. New salaries and new pensions have been found necessary to satisfy the clamours of those who will never be satisfied; and the greater occasions which the courtiers have, and the greater necessities which they are in, the more will still be found necessary: for it is no news for artful men to engage their superiors in difficulties, and then to be paid largely for helping them out of them again. The customs and excise are anticipated and mortgaged almost beyond redemption: The salt, leather, windows, and almost every thing else that can be taxed, is already taxed, and some of them so high, as to lessen the produce, and they are appropriated to pay off debts due to private men.

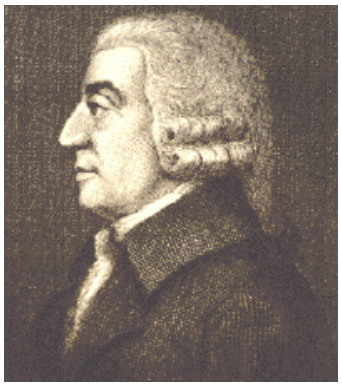
SOURCE

John Trenchard, *Cato's Letters, or Essays on Liberty, Civil and Religious, and Other Important Subjects. Four volumes in Two*, edited and annotated by Ronald Hamowy (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995). Vol. 3. Chapter: NO. 86. SATURDAY, JULY 21, 1722. The terrible Consequences of a War to England, and Reasons against engaging in one. (Trenchard)

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1239/64510/1598645>

Quotation No. 20. Adam Smith observes that the true costs of war remain hidden from the taxpayers because they are sheltered in the metropole far from the fighting and instead of increasing taxes the government pays for the war by increasing the national debt (1776)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/160>]
[Date published: 18 February, 2008]



Adam Smith (1723 – 1790)

About this Quotation:

In this quotation Adam Smith makes a number of important points. Firstly, he correctly observes that the citizens in the metropole, far removed from the front, have no direct experience of the fighting but instead are "amused" and entertained by reports of the glorious successes of the nation. Secondly, they are shielded from the true costs of the war because the government finds it politically difficult to raise taxes too much, so it just adds the cost to the national debt thereby only having to increase taxes to cover the increased interest on the debt.

The Quotation

In Chapter III: Of Publick Debts in *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith notes that most people put up with slightly higher taxes in wartime in exchange for the "amusement" of reading about imperial exploits, little realizing that the true cost of war has been added to the natonal debt:

> The ordinary expence of the greater part of modern governments in time of peace being equal or nearly equal to their ordinary revenue, when war comes they are both unwilling and unable to increase their revenue in proportion to the increase of their expence. They are unwilling, for fear of offending the people, who, by so great and so sudden an increase of taxes, would soon be disgusted with the war; and they are unable, from not well knowing what taxes would be sufficient to produce the revenue wanted. The facility of borrowing delivers them from the embarrassment which this fear and inability would otherwise occasion. By means of borrowing they are enabled, with a very moderate increase of taxes, to raise, from year to year, money sufficient for carrying on the war, and by the practice of perpetual funding they are enabled, with the smallest possible increase of taxes, to raise annually the largest possible sum of money. **In great empires the people who live in the capital, and in the provinces remote from the scene of action, feel, many of them scarce any inconveniency from the war; but enjoy, at their ease, the amusement of reading in the newspapers the exploits of their own fleets and armies. To them this amusement compensates the small difference between the taxes which they pay on account of the war, and those which they had been accustomed to pay in time of peace. They are commonly dissatisfied with the return of peace, which puts an end to their amusement, and to a thousand visionary hopes of conquest**

and national glory, from a longer continuance of the war.

The return of peace, indeed, seldom relieves them from the greater part of the taxes imposed during the war. These are mortgaged for the interest of the debt, contracted in order to carry it on. If, over and above paying the interest of this debt, and defraying the ordinary expence of government, the old revenue, together with the new taxes, produce some surplus revenue, it may perhaps be converted into a sinking fund for paying off the debt. But, in the first place, this sinking fund, even supposing it should be applied to no other purpose, is generally altogether inadequate for paying, in the course of any period during which it can reasonably be expected that peace should continue, the whole debt contracted during the war; and, in the second place, this fund is almost always applied to other purposes.

The new taxes were imposed for the sole purpose of paying the interest of the money borrowed upon them. If they produce more, it is generally something which was neither intended nor expected, and is therefore seldom very considerable. Sinking funds have generally arisen, not so much from any surplus of the taxes which was over and above what was necessary for paying the interest or annuity originally charged upon them, as from a subsequent reduction of that interest. That of Holland in 1655, and that of the ecclesiastical state in 1685, were both formed in this manner. Hence the usual insufficiency of such funds.

During the most profound peace, various events occur which require an extraordinary expence, and government finds it always more convenient to defray this expence by misapplying the sinking fund than by imposing a new tax. Every new tax is immediately felt more or less by the people. It occasions always some murmur, and meets with some opposition. The more taxes may have been multiplied, the higher they may have been raised upon every different subject of taxation; the more loudly the people complain of every new tax, the more difficult it becomes too either to find out new subjects of taxation, or to raise much higher the taxes already imposed upon the old. A momentary suspension of the payment of debt is not immediately felt by the people, and occasions neither murmur nor complaint. To borrow of the sinking fund is always an obvious and easy expedient for getting out of the present difficulty. The more the publick debts may have been accumulated, the more necessary it may have become to study to reduce them, the more dangerous, the more ruinous it may be to misapply any part of the sinking fund; the less likely is the publick debt to be reduced to any considerable degree, the more likely, the more certainly is the sinking fund to be misapplied towards defraying all the extraordinary expences which occur in time of peace. When a nation is already over burdened with taxes, nothing but the necessities of a new war, nothing but either the animosity of national vengeance, or the anxiety for national security, can induce the people to submit, with tolerable patience, to a new tax. Hence the usual misapplication of the sinking fund.

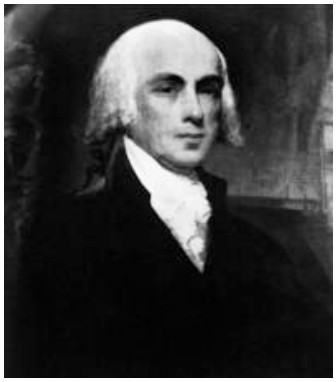
SOURCE

Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, Vol. I and II*, ed. R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner, vol. II of the *Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1981). Chapter: [V.iii] CHAPTER III: Of publick Debts.

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/200/217530/2316867>

Quotation No. 19. James Madison on the need for the people to declare war and for each generation, not future generations, to bear the costs of the wars they fight (1792)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/144>]
[Date published: 17 December, 2007]



James Madison (1751 – 1836)

About this Quotation:

In this 1792 newspaper article James Madison criticises Rousseau's notion of a plan for perpetual peace in Europe. Madison is not against peace but is against a purely "philosophical" approach which ignores the realities of who starts wars and how these wars are to be funded. Madison attacks the idea of governments going into debt to fund a current war, thus requiring future generations to pay for it. In his view, if the current generation really knew how much their wars cost them this might disincline them to starting wars and thus help to reduce the incidence of war.

The Quotation

In 1792 James Madison wrote a newspaper article criticizing Rousseau's plan for introducing "perpetual peace" in Europe. According to Madison, a better way to reduce the incidence of war, especially in a democracy like the U.S., was to make the people pay the full cost of war immediately instead of using debt to force later generations to foot the bill:

Had Rousseau lived to see the constitution of the United States and of France, his judgment might have escaped the censure to which his project has exposed it.

The other class of wars, corresponding with the public will, are less susceptible of remedy. There are antidotes, nevertheless, which may not be without their efficacy. As wars of the first class were to be prevented by subjecting the will of the government to the will of the society, those of the second class can only be controuled by subjecting the will of the society to the reason of the society; by establishing permanent and constitutional maxims of conduct, which may prevail over occasional impressions and inconsiderate pursuits.

Here our republican philosopher might have proposed as a model to lawgivers, **that war should not only be declared by the authority of the people, whose toils and treasures are to support its burdens, instead of the government which is to reap its fruits: but that each generation should be made to bear the burden of its own wars, instead of carrying them on, at the expence of other generations. And to give the fullest energy to his plan, he might have added, that each generation should not only bear its own burdens, but that the taxes composing them, should include a due proportion of such as by their direct operation keep the people awake, along with those, which being wrapped up in other payments, may leave them asleep, to misapplications of their money.**

To the objection, if started, that where the benefits of war descend to succeeding generations, the burdens ought also to descend, he might have answered; that

the exceptions could not be easily made; that, if attempted, they must be made by one only of the parties interested; that in the alternative of sacrificing exceptions to general rules, or of converting exceptions into general rules, the former is the lesser evil; that the expense of necessary wars, will never exceed the resources of an entire generation; that, in fine the objection vanishes before the fact, that in every nation which has drawn on posterity for the support of its wars, the accumulated interest of its perpetual debts, has soon become more than a sufficient principal for all its exigencies.

Were a nation to impose such restraints on itself, avarice would be sure to calculate the expences of ambition; in the equipoise of these passions, reason would be free to decide for the public good; and an ample reward would accrue to the state, first, from the avoidance of all its wars of folly, secondly, from the vigor of its unwasted resources for wars of necessity and defence. Were all nations to follow the example, the reward would be doubled to each; and the temple of Janus might be shut, never to be opened more.

Had Rousseau lived to see the rapid progress of reason and reformation, which the present day exhibits, the philanthropy which dictated his project would find a rich enjoyment in the scene before him. And after tracing the past frequency of wars to a will in the government independent of the will of the people; to the practice by each generation of taxing the principal of its debts on future generations; and to the facility with which each generation is seduced into assumption of the interest, by the deceptive species of taxes which pay it; he would contemplate, in a reform of every government subjecting its will to that of the people, in a subjection of each generation to the payment of its own debts, and in a substitution of a more palpable, in place of an imperceptible mode of paying them, the only hope of Universal and Perpetual Peace.

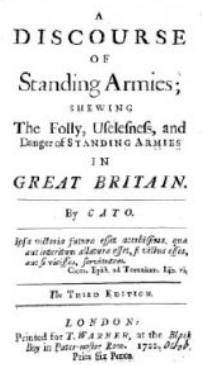
SOURCE

James Madison, *The Writings of James Madison, comprising his Public Papers and his Private Correspondence, including his numerous letters and documents now for the first time printed,* ed. Gaillard Hunt (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900). Vol. 6. Chapter: *UNIVERSAL PEACE.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1941/124396>

Quotation No. 18. Thomas Gordon on standing armies as a power which is inconsistent with liberty (1722)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/142>]
[Date published: 5 November, 2007]


A
DISCOURSE
OF
Standing Armies;
SHEWING
The Folly, Uſeleſneſs, and
Danger of STANDING ARMIES
IN
GREAT BRITAIN.
By CATO.
The Third Edition.
LONDON:

Thomas Gordon (1692 – 1750)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

Thomas Gordon was much read in the American colonies on the eve of the Revolution. One of his great concerns, shared by many in the 18th century "commonwealthman" tradition," was that standing armies were a threat to liberty. Their danger came from two sources: one was the sheer cost to taxpayers of having a large an permanent body of troops equipped and stationed at home during peace time; the other was the fact that it provided a tempting tool to despotically minded "Princes" or monarchs to use against their own people should they object too strenuously against government policy. It was for this reason that it became embedded in the American constitution that there was a right to bear arms and to form local militias as an alternative to monarchical standing armies.

THE QUOTATION

Thomas Gordon, who also wrote under the name of Cato, was an adamant opponent of standing armies, seeing in them a key method of undermining ancient English liberties as he argues in his *Discourse* of 1722:

I have lately met with some Creatures and Tools of Power, who speak the same Language now: They tell us, that Matters are come to that Pass, that we must either receive the Pretender, or keep him out with Bribes and Standing Armies: That the Nation is so corrupt, that there is no governing it by any other Means: And, in short, that we must submit to this great Evil, to prevent a greater; as if any Mischief could be more terrible than the highest and most terrible of all Mischiefs, universal Corruption, and a military Government. It is indeed impossible for the Subtilty of Traitors, the Malice of Devils, or for the Cunning and Cruelty of our most implacable Enemies, to suggest stronger Motives for the undermining and Overthrow of our excellent Establishment, which is built upon the Destruction of Tyranny, and can stand upon no other Bottom. It is Madness in Extremity, to hope that a Government founded upon Liberty, and the free Choice of the Assertors of it, can be supported by other Principles; and whoever would maintain it by contrary ones, intends to blow it up, let him alledge what he will. This gives me every Day new Reasons to believe what I have long suspected; for, if ever a Question should arise, Whether a Nation shall submit to certain Ruin, or struggle for a Remedy? these Gentlemen well know which Side they will chuse, and certainly intend that which they must chuse…

Almost all Men desire Power, and few lose any Opportunity to get it, and all who are like to suffer under it, ought to be strictly upon their Guard in such Conjunctures as are most likely to encrease, and make it uncontroulable. **There are but two Ways in Nature to enslave a People, and continue that Slavery over them; the first is Superstition, and the last is Force: By the one, we are perswaded that it is our Duty to be undone; and the other undoes us whether we will or no.**

I take it, that we are pretty much out of Danger of the first, at present; and, I think, we cannot be too much upon our guard against the other; for, tho' we have nothing to fear from the best Prince in the World, yet we have every thing to fear from those who would give him a Power inconsistent with Liberty, and with a Constitution which has lasted almost a Thousand Years without such a Power, which will never be ask'd with an Intention to make no Use of it…

In short, there can be but two Ways in Nature to govern a Nation, one is by their own Consent, and the other by Force: One gains their Hearts, and the other holds their Hands: The first is always chosen by those who design to govern the People for the People's Interest, and the other by those who design to oppress them for their own; for whoever desires only to protect them, will covet no useless Power to injure them: There is no fear of a People's acting against their own Interest, when they know what it is, and when, through ill Conduct or unfortunate Accidents, they become dissatisfied with their present Condition, the only effectual Way to avoid the threatning Evil, is to remove their Grievances.

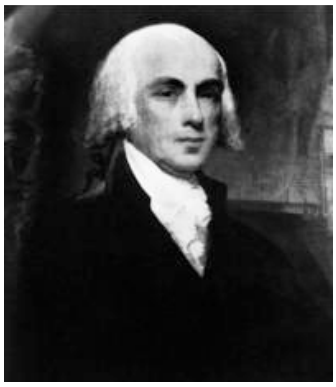
SOURCE

Thomas Gordon, *A Discourse of Standing Armies; shewing the Folly, Uselessness, and Danger of Standing Armies in Great Britain*, 3rd edition (London: T. Warner, 1722). Chapter: *A DISCOURSE OF Standing Armies, &c.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1719/77431/1877389>

Quotation No. 17. James Madison argues that the constitution places war-making powers squarely with the legislative branch; for the president to have these powers is the "the true nurse of executive aggrandizement" (1793)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/136>]
[Date published: 10 September, 2007]



James Madison (1751 – 1836)

About this Quotation:

The publication by Liberty Fund of Hamilton and Madison's *The Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793-1794* (2007) and the putting online of a 10 volume collection of *The Writings of James Madison* (1909) is an excellent opportunity to begin exploring the thought of James Madison. Here we look at the "Pacificus-Helvidius" debates. President George Washington's proclamation of the Neutrality Act in 1793 sparked a spirited debate between Alexander Hamilton ("Pacificus") and James Madison ("Helvidius") over the war-making powers of the executive and legislative bodies. Hamilton, preferring more centralised control and a more powerful presidency, was in favor of broad powers for the executive branch; whereas Madison feared that under the guise of war the president could and would amass great powers over budgets, patronage, and honours. Hence he favoured the balance of powers remaining with the legislative branch.

The Quotation

In 1793-94 Madison and Hamilton in the *Pacificus-Helvidous Debates* argued about the proper role of the executive and the legislative branches of the U.S. government in the conduct of war. Writing as "Helvidius", Madison observed that:

In no part of the constitution is more wisdom to be found, than in the clause which confides the question of war or peace to the legislature, and not to the executive department. Beside the objection to such a mixture to heterogeneous powers, the trust and the temptation would be too great for any one man; not such as nature may offer as the prodigy of many centuries, but such as may be expected in the ordinary successions of magistracy. **War is in fact the true nurse of executive aggrandizement. In war, a physical force is to be created; and it is the executive will, which is to direct it. In war, the public treasures are to be unlocked; and it is the executive hand which is to dispense them. In war, the honours and emoluments of office are to be multiplied; and it is the executive patronage under which they are to be enjoyed. It is in war, finally, that laurels are to be gathered, and it is the executive brow they are to encircle.** The strongest passions and most dangerous weaknesses of the human breast; ambition, avarice, vanity, the honourable or venial love of fame, are all in conspiracy against the desire and duty of peace.

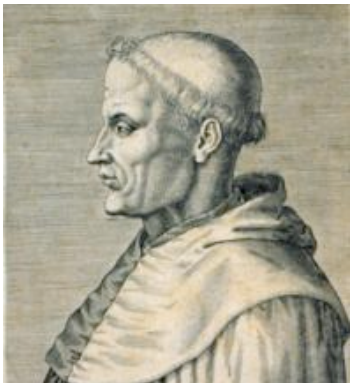
SOURCE

The Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793-1794: Toward the Completion of the American Founding, edited with and Introduction by Morton J. Frisch (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007). Chapter: *Helvidius Number IV.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1910/112553/2335686>

Quotation No. 16. St. Thomas Aquinas discusses the three conditions for a just war (1265-74)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/130>]
[Date published: 23 July, 2007]



St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274)

About this Quotation:

As wars are being fought around us and in our name it is important that we be clear about the justness of these undertakings. The great Aristotelian philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas has three conditions which need to met before a war can be called "just": does the prince who declares war have the correct authority to do so? does the war declaring nation have just cause to seek redress for an injury done to it? does the party declaring war have just intent in promoting good or avoiding evil? These are stringent conditions which have not been met very often, if ever, in the past. One recalls the long list of frivolous reasons for going to war which Thomas Gordon drew up.

The Quotation

The great Aristotelian philosopher Thomas Aquinas discusses in the 2nd part of *Summa Theologica* the 3 conditions for a just war:

OF WAR.

Article I.—Is it always a sin to go to war?

R. There are three requisites for a war to be just. **The first thing is the authority of the prince by whose command the war is to be waged. It does not belong to a private person to start a war, for he can prosecute his claim in the court of his superior. In like manner the mustering of the people, that has to be done in wars, does not belong to a private person. But since the care of the commonwealth is entrusted to princes, to them belongs the protection of the common weal of the city, kingdom, or province subject to them. And as they lawfully defend it with the material sword against inward disturbances by punishing male-factors, so it belongs to them also to protect the commonwealth from enemies without by the sword of war.** The second requisite is a just cause, so that they who are assailed should deserve to be assailed for some fault that they have committed. Hence Augustine says: "Just wars are usually defined as those which avenge injuries, in cases where a nation or city has to be chastised for having either neglected to punish the wicked doings of its people, or neglected to restore what has been wrongfully taken away." The third thing requisite is a right intention of promoting good or avoiding evil. For Augustine says: "Eagerness to hurt, bloodthirsty desire of revenge, an untamed and unforgiving temper, ferocity in renewing the struggle, dust of empire,—these and the like excesses are justly blamed in war."

§ 1. To the objection from the text that "all that take the sword shall perish with the sword," it is to be said, as Augustine says, that "he takes the sword, who without either command or grant of any superior or lawful authority, arms himself to shed the blood of another." But he who uses the sword by the authority

of a prince or judge (if he is a private person), or out of zeal for justice, and by the authority of God (if he is a public person), does not take the sword of himself, but uses it as committed to him by another.

§ 2. To the objection from the text, "I say to you not to resist evil," it is to be said, as Augustine says, that such precepts are always to be observed "in readiness of heart," so that a man be ever ready not to resist, if there be occasion for non-resistance. But sometimes he must take another course in view of the common good, or even in view of those with whom he fights. Hence Augustine says: "He is the better for being overcome, from whom the license of wrong-doing is snatched away: for there is no greater unhappiness than the happiness of sinners, the nourishment of an impunity which is only granted as a punishment, and the strengthening of that domestic foe, an evil will."

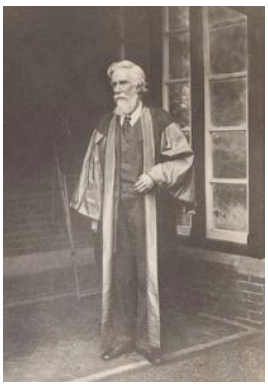
SOURCE

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Aquinas Ethicus: or, the Moral Teaching of St. Thomas. A Translation of the Principal Portions of the Second part of the Summa Theologica*, with Notes by Joseph Rickaby, S.J. (London: Burns and Oates, 1892). Chapter: *QUESTION XL.: OF WAR.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1965/124133/2483898>

Quotation No. 15. A.V. Dicey noted that a key change in public thinking during the 19thC was the move away from the early close association between "peace and retrenchment" in the size of the government (1905)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/108>]
[Date published: 25 September, 2006]



Albert Venn Dicey (1835 – 1922)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

It is hard to believe that Dicey was already complaining about the rise of high taxing and high spending "collectivists" in 1905 when these lectures were first published. He laments the passing of the "individualist radicals of 1830" and the laissez-faire anti-imperialism of Richard Cobden, and the coming to power of the "Benthamites". One of the key points he makes in this passage is the abandonment of the early 19th century link made between a policy of peace in external affairs and the policy of reducing the size and cost of government ("retrenchment") domestically. Dicey also reminds his readers that every rise in taxation is a diminution in every individual's rights to property and liberty.

THE QUOTATION

In the 12th lecture on the "Relation between Legislative Opinion and General Public Opinion" the great English constitutional jurist A.V. Dicey summarizes his conclusions concerning the movement away from "individualism" towards "collectivism" in the late 19th century:

Politics are not the same thing as law, but in modern England any revolution in political ideas is certain to correspond with alterations in legislative opinion. If then we take care not to confound the accidental division of parties with essential differences of political faith, we discover a change in the world of politics which closely resembles, if it be not rather a part of, the transition, with which these lectures have been occupied, from individualism to collectivism. **One example of this change in political opinion is to be found in the altered attitude of the public towards peace and economy. During the era of Benthamism "peace and retrenchment" were the watchwords of all serious statesmen. This formula has now fallen out of remembrance. The point to be noted is that this fact is significant of a very profound revolution in political belief. The demand for peace abroad and economy at home stood in very close connection with the passion for individual freedom of action which was a leading characteristic of Benthamite liberalism. Peace ought to mean light, and war certainly does mean heavy taxation, but heavy taxation whether justifiable, as it often is, or not, always must be a curtailment of each citizen's power to employ his property in the way he himself chooses.** It is an interference, though in many cases a quite justifiable interference, with his liberty. The augmentation, moreover, of the public revenue by means of taxation is not only a diminution of each taxpayer's private income and of his power within a certain sphere to do as he likes, but

also an increase in the resources and the power of the State; but to curtail the free action of individuals, and to increase the authority of the Government, was to pursue a policy opposed to the doctrine, and still more to the sentiment of Benthamite Liberals. Indifference to the mere lightening of taxation, as an end absolutely desirable in itself, is assuredly characteristic of a state of opinion under which men expect far more benefit for the mass of the people from the extension of the power of the State than from the energy of individual action. No doubt collectivists may hold that the proceeds of heavy taxes are wasted or are spent on the effort to attain objects in themselves undesirable; but the mere transference of the wealth of individuals to the coffers of the State cannot appear to a collectivist, as it did to the individualistic Radicals of 1830, to be in itself a gigantic evil. We may put side by side with the decline of the economic radicalism represented in the last generation by Joseph Hume, both the growth of imperialism, and the discredit which has fallen upon the colonial policy of laissez faire connected with the name of Cobden. For imperialism, whatever its merits and demerits, bears witness to a new-born sense among Englishmen of their membership in a great imperial State. From whichever side the matter be looked at, the changes of political show a close correspondence with the alterations of legislative opinion.

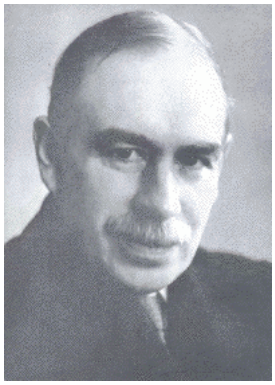
SOURCE

Albert Venn Dicey, *Lectures on the Relation between Law and Public Opinion in England during the Nineteenth Century,* edited and with an Introduction by Richard VandeWetering (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008). Chapter: *I.: As to analogous changes of opinion in different spheres and also in the lives of individuals.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/2119/164890/2929939>

Quotation No. 14. J.M. Keynes reflected on that "happy age" of international commerce and freedom of travel that was destroyed by the cataclysm of the First World War (1920)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/88>]
[Date published: 20 February, 2006]



John Maynard Keynes (1883 – 1946)

About this Quotation:

2006 is the 90th anniversary of two of the bloodiest battles of the First World War, Verdun and the Somme, where hundreds of thousands of men were killed and injured. In this quotation Keynes reminds us of the classical liberal world which was destroyed forever by that war. It also makes me think of a slightly rewritten song by John Lennon, "Imagine": "Imagine there are no borders, it's easy if you try" (and then add in place of "borders" - "currency control", "passports", "fiat money", and so on. In the post 9/11 world imagine if you can such a world. A very useful companion piece to Keynes' book is that by the great Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises, *Nation, State, and Economy* (1919) which says much the same only better.

The Quotation

2006 is the 90th anniversary of two of the bloodiest battles of the First World War, Verdun and the Somme. Keynes reminds us of the classical liberal world which was destroyed by that war:

> That happy age lost sight of a view of the world which filled with deep-seated melancholy the founders of our Political Economy. Before the eighteenth century mankind entertained no false hopes. To lay the illusions which grew popular at that age's latter end, Malthus disclosed a Devil. For half a century all serious economical writings held that Devil in clear prospect. For the next half century he was chained up and out of sight. Now perhaps we have loosed him again.
>
> What an extraordinary episode in the economic progress of man that age was which came to an end in August, 1914! The greater part of the population, it is true, worked hard and lived at a low standard of comfort, yet were, to all appearances, reasonably contented with this lot. But escape was possible, for **any man of capacity or character at all exceeding the average, into the middle and upper classes, for whom life offered, at a low cost and with the least trouble, conveniences, comforts, and amenities beyond the compass of the richest and most powerful monarchs of other ages. The inhabitant of London could order by telephone, sipping his morning tea in bed, the various products of the whole earth, in such quantity as he might see fit, and reasonably expect their early delivery upon his doorstep; he could at the same moment and by the same means adventure his wealth in the natural resources and new enterprises of any quarter of the world, and share, without exertion or even trouble, in their prospective fruits and advantages; or he could decide to couple the security of his fortunes with the good faith of the townspeople of any**

substantial municipality in any continent that fancy or information might recommend. He could secure forthwith, if he wished it, cheap and comfortable means of transit to any country or climate without passport or other formality, could despatch his servant to the neighboring office of a bank for such supply of the precious metals as might seem convenient, and could then proceed abroad to foreign quarters, without knowledge of their religion, language, or customs, bearing coined wealth upon his person, and would consider himself greatly aggrieved and much surprised at the least interference. But, most important of all, he regarded this state of affairs as normal, certain, and permanent, except in the direction of further improvement, and any deviation from it as aberrant, scandalous, and avoidable. The projects and politics of militarism and imperialism, of racial and cultural rivalries, of monopolies, restrictions, and exclusion, which were to play the serpent to this paradise, were little more than the amusements of his daily newspaper, and appeared to exercise almost no influence at all on the ordinary course of social and economic life, the internationalization of which was nearly complete in practice.

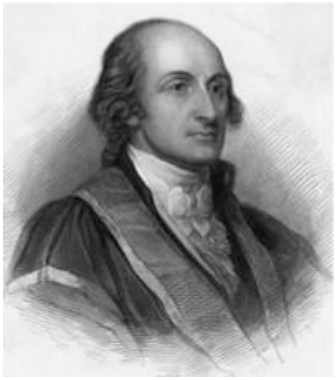
SOURCE

John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace,* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Howe: 1920). Chapter: *CHAPTER II: EUROPE BEFORE THE WAR.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/303/27959/698643>

Quotation No. 13. John Jay in the Federalist Papers discussed why nations go to war and concluded that it was not for justice but "whenever they have a prospect of getting any thing by it" (1787)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/82>]
[Date published: 9 January, 2006]



John Jay (1745 – 1829)

About this Quotation:

John Jay returns to an idea expressed by Thomas Gordon on the often frivolous and personal reasons why rulers take their nations to war.

The Quotation

In a series in the *Federalist Papers*, John Jay explores how a national government in America might deal with the problems of war and peace:

But the safety of the people of America against dangers from foreign force, depends not only on their forbearing to give just causes of war to other nations, but also on their placing and continuing themselves in such a situation as not to invite hostility or insult; for it need not be observed, that there are pretended as well as just causes of war.

It is too true, however disgraceful it may be to human nature, that nations in general will make war whenever they have a prospect of getting any thing by it; nay, that absolute monarchs will often make war when their nations are to get nothing by it, but for purposes and objects merely personal, such as, a thirst for military glory, revenge for personal affronts, ambition, or private compacts to aggrandize or support their particular families, or partisans. These, and a variety of motives, which affect only the mind of the sovereign, often lead him to engage in wars not sanctioned by justice, or the voice and interests of his people. But independent of these inducements to war, which are most prevalent in absolute monarchies, but which well deserve our attention, there are others which affect nations as often as kings; and some of them will on examination be found to grow out of our relative situation and circumstances.

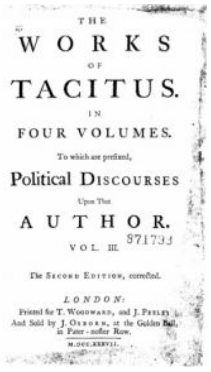
Source

The Federalist (The Gideon Edition), Edited with an Introduction, Reader's Guide, Constitutional Cross-reference, Index, and Glossary by George W. Carey and James McClellan (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001). Chapter: *No. 4: The same Subject continued.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/788/108565/2273597>

Quotation No. 12. Thomas Gordon gives a long list of ridiculous and frivolous reasons why kings and tyrants have started wars which have led only to the enslavement and destruction of their own people (1737)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/77>]
[Date published: 21 November, 2005]


THE
WORKS
OF
TACITUS.
IN
FOUR VOLUMES.
To which are prefixed,
Political DISCOURSES
Upon That
AUTHOR.
VOL. III.
The SECOND EDITION, corrected.
LONDON:
Printed for T. WOODWARD, and J. PEELE, &c.
And Sold by J. OSBORN, at the Golden Ball,
in Pater-noster Row.
M.DCC.XXXVII.

Thomas Gordon (1692 – 1750)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

Thomas Gordon used the writings of Tacitus on the corruption and tyranny of the Roman Empire as a handy weapon with which to flog the British Empire under which he lived. One wonders if one might do the same in our own time? In this passage Gordon considers the "follies of conquering", in particular the foolish and sometimes frivolous reasons why kings and emperors have gone to war such as "for words that had a foolish meaning, or no meaning at all."

THE QUOTATION

Gordon is best known as one of the authors of *Cato's Letters*, a severe critique of the political corruption and wars of the British Empire which very much influenced the American colonists. In his lengthy "Discourses on Tacitus" he concludes a section on the Follies of Conquering with the following:

I might here display what ridiculous causes do often pique and awaken the vanity and ambition of Princes, and prompt them to lavish lives and treasure, and utterly undo those whom they should tenderly protect. For a beast of burden, or even for the tooth of a beast; for a mistress, for a river, for a senseless word hastily spoken, for words that had a foolish meaning, or no meaning at all; for an empty sepulchre or an empty title; to dry the tears of a coquette, to comply with the whims of a pedant, or to execute the curses of a bigot; important Wars have sometimes been waged, and nations animated to destroy one another; nor is there any security against such destructive follies, where the sense of every man must acquiesce in the wild passion of one; and where the interest and peace, and preservation of a State, are found too light to ballance his rage or caprice. Hence the policy of the Romans to tame a people not easy to be subdued; they committed such to the domination of Tyrants. Thus they did in Armenia, and thus in Britain. And these instruments did not only enslave their subjects, but by continual fighting with one another, consume them.

Necessary Wars are accompanied with evils more than enough; and who can bear or forgive calamities courted and sought? The Roman State owed her greatness in a good measure to a misfortune; it was founded in War, and nourished by it. The same may be said of the Turkish Monarchy. But States formed for peace, though they do not arrive to such immensity and grandeur, are more lasting and secure; witness Sparta and Venice. The former lasted eight hundred

years, and the other has lasted twelve hundred, without any Revolution; what errors they both committed, were owing to their attempts to conquer, for which they were not formed; though the Spartans were exceeding brave and victorious; but they wanted the *Plebs ingenua*, which formed the strength of the Roman Armies; as the Janizaries, a militia formerly excellently trained and disciplined, formed those of the Turk. With the latter, fighting and extending their dominions, is an article of their Religion, as false and barbarous in this as in many of its other principles, and as little calculated for the good of men.

SOURCE

Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *The Works of Tacitus. In Four Volumes. To which are prefixed, Political Discourses upon that Author by Thomas Gordon.* The Second Edition, corrected. (London: T. Woodward and J. Peele, 1737). Vol. 1. Chapter: *Sect. VI.: The Folly of conquering further urged and exemplified.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/784/79105/1898733>

Quotation No. 11. Hugo Grotius states that in an unjust war any acts of hostility done in that war are "unjust in themselves" (1625)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/68>]
[Date published: 19 September, 2005]

Hugo Grotius (1583 – 1645)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

We continue to explore Liberty Fund's new edition of this great work. In this passage Grotius argues that if the cause of a war be unjust, then any acts of hostility done in that war are also unjust; and the party which does any damage in that war must pay full restitution. These thoughts remind one of what Bates says to King Henry on the eve of battle in Shakespeare's play *Henry V*.

THE QUOTATION

Grotius attempted to codify the historical, moral, and legal grounds for justly waging war against an enemy. Here are his thoughts on acts committed in an unjust war:

III. What is done in an unjust War is unjust in itself.

III. **We then first declare, if the Cause of the War be unjust, tho' it be undertaken in a solemn Manner, yet all the Acts of Hostility done in it are unjust in themselves. So that they who knowingly do these Acts, or join in the acting of them, Are to be accounted in the Number of those, who without Repentance cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, 1 Cor. vi. 10. But true Repentance, if Opportunity and Ability will allow, absolutely requires that he who has done any Damage, either by killing, ravaging or plundering, should make full Restitution**. Therefore GOD himself declares their Fasts to be unacceptable to him, who detained their Captives unjustly taken. And the King of Nineve, (Jonah iii. 8.) proclaiming a Fast to his Subjects, commands them all to restore what they had taken by Rapine; acknowledging, by the Guide of natural Reason, that all Repentance without such a Restitution would be but pretended, and to no Purpose. And not only the Jews and Christians are of this Opinion, but even the a Mahometans themselves.

IV. Who are hereby obliged to make Restitution, and how far.

IV. But the Authors of War, whether by their Authority, or Counsel, are obliged to make this Restitution, according to what we have declared in general elsewhere, for all those Damages which are the usual Consequences of War; and for what are unusual, if they either contributed to them by Command or Advice, or not prevented them, if it was in their Power to have done it. Thus are Generals and Officers also obliged to do, in Relation to those Things which have been committed by those under their Command. The Soldiers, who have concurred in an Act of Hostility committed in common, as the burning of a Town, are each responsible for the whole Damage. But if the Damage has been caused by the distinct Acts of several, each shall be answerable for the Mischief, of which he has been the sole or partial Cause.

SOURCE

Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, edited and with an Introduction by Richard Tuck, from the Edition by Jean Barbeyrac (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005). Vol. 3. Chapter: *CHAPTER X: Advice concerning Things done in an unjust War.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1427/121236/2445770>

Quotation No. 10. Hugo Grotius discusses the just causes of going to war, especially the idea that the capacity to wage war must be matched by the intent to do so (1625)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/67>]
[Date published: 12 September, 2005]

Hugo Grotius (1583 – 1645)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

We first used a quotation from Grotius' *The Rights of War and Peace* in May 2004 and the edition we used was from 1901. Since then the marvelous three volume edition published by Liberty Fund and edited by Richard Tuck has appeared (2005) which supercedes all earlier editions and translations. In this quotation Grotius explores an important contemporary topic, when is it just to go to war?

THE QUOTATION

Grotius attempted to codify the historical, moral, and legal grounds for justly waging war against an enemy. Here are his thoughts on waging war against a perceived threat:

V. 1. **First therefore, the Dread (as we before observed) of our Neighbour's encreasing Strength, is not a warrantable Ground for making War upon him. To justify taking up Arms in our own Defence, there ought to be a Necessity for so doing, which there is not, unless we are sure, with a moral Certainty, that he has not only Forces sufficient, but a full Intention to injure us.**

2. Wherefore their Opinion is not to be assented to, who maintain that it is lawful to bring War upon a neighbouring Prince, who, in his own Territories shall erect a Castle, or other fortified Place, which may some Time or other be detrimental to us, tho' he is under no Obligation to the contrary by any previous Compact. For to remove such Apprehensions, we should apply ourselves to the raising such within our own Dominions, and look out for other Remedies, rather than immediately have Recourse to War. From whence it is deducible, that the War of the Romans against Philip King of Macedon, and of Lysimachus against Demetrius, if they had no other Cause (than this uncertain Fear) were not just. I am wonderfully pleased with that of Tacitus, about the Cauchi, They are a People of the greatest Repute and Figure in all Germany, and chuse to maintain their Grandeur by their Justice, living quiet, and keeping at Home; as free from Ambition as from Envy. They give no Occasion for Wars, committing neither Outrage nor Robbery; and what is a great Proof of their Valour, and their Strength, they preserve their Superiority, without Injury and Oppression: However, they are always in a Readiness for War, and can, if their Affairs require it, raise an Army in an Instant, being well provided with Men and Horses, and in the midst of Peace are equally respected and feared.

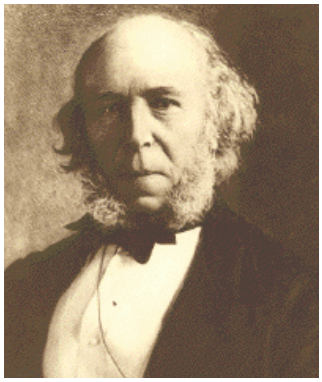
SOURCE

Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, edited and with an Introduction by Richard Tuck, from the Edition by Jean Barbeyrac (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005). Vol. 2. Chapter: *CHAPTER XXII: Of the unjust Causes of War.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1947/121318/2448996>

Quotation No. 9. Herbert Spencer argued that in a militant type of society the state would become more centralised and administrative, as compulsory education clearly showed (1882)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/58>]
[Date published: 20 June, 2005]



Herbert Spencer (1820 – 1903)

About this Quotation:

Herbert Spencer continues his discussion of the differences between the "militant" and "industrial" types of societies. In this passage he details some of the activities of the state in a "militant" type of society, namely compulsory state education, an established church, pervasive state regulation of industry, and so on. The sad thing about Spencer is that he aged, he seemed to become more radical in his liberalism whilst the society around became more statist and interventionist.

The Quotation

Central to Spencer's sociology of the state was the distinction between what he called militant types of society and industrial types of society. In the latter type of society he observed that administration by the state is either non-existent or extremely decentralized, as the following quote shows:

§ 569. Again changing the point of view, we see that whereas public control in the militant type is both positively regulative and negatively regulative, in the industrial type it is negatively regulative only. To the slave, to the soldier, or to other member of a community organized for war, authority says—"Thou shalt do this; thou shalt not do that." But to the member of the industrial community, authority gives only one of these orders—"Thou shalt not do that."

For people who, carrying on their private transactions by voluntary cooperation, also voluntarily cooperate to form and support a governmental agency, are, by implication, people who authorize it to impose on their respective activities, only those restraints which they are all interested in maintaining—the restraints which check aggressions. Omitting criminals (who under the assumed conditions must be very few, if not a vanishing quantity), each citizen will wish to preserve uninvaded his sphere of action, while not invading others' spheres, and to retain whatever benefits are achieved within it. The very motive which prompts all to unite in upholding a public protector of their individualities, will also prompt them to unite in preventing any interference with their individualities beyond that required for this end.

Hence it follows that while, in the militant type, regimentation in the army is paralleled by centralized administration throughout the society at large; in the industrial type, administration, becoming decentralized, is at the same time narrowed in its range. Nearly all public organizations save that for administering justice, necessarily disappear; since they have the common character that they either aggress on the citizen by dictating his actions, or by taking from him more property than is needful for protecting him, or by both. **Those who are forced to send their children to this or that school, those who have, directly or indirectly, to help in supporting a**

State priesthood, those from whom rates are demanded that parish officers may administer public charity, those who are taxed to provide gratis reading for people who will not save money for library subscriptions, those whose businesses are carried on under regulation by inspectors, those who have to pay the costs of State science-and-art-teaching, State emigration, &c., all have their individualities trenched upon, either by compelling them to do what they would not spontaneously do, or by taking away money which else would have furthered their private ends. Coercive arrangements of such kinds, consistent with the militant type, are inconsistent with the industrial type.

SOURCE

Herbert Spencer, *Political Institutions, being Part V of the Principles of Sociology (The Concluding Portion of Vol. II)* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1882). Chapter: *CHAPTER XVIII.: the militant type of society.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1336/54833/1319226>

Quotation No. 8. William Graham Sumner denounced America's war against Spain and thought that "war, debt, taxation, diplomacy, a grand governmental system, pomp, glory, a big army and navy, lavish expenditures, political jobbery" would result in imperialism (1898)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/56>]
[Date published: 30 May, 2005]

William Graham Sumner (1840 – 1910)

About this Quotation:

Numerous thinkers have argued that there is a continuity in American foreign policy that goes back at least to the Spanish-American War of 1898. Sumner, who lived through this war, was one of these thinkers. He predicted that the end result of continuous "war, debt, taxation, diplomacy, a grand governmental system, pomp, glory, a big army and navy, lavish expenditures, political jobbery" would be the opposite of what America was intended to be, namely "imperialism".

The Quotation

In a lecture given in 1898, the great American sociologist William Graham Sumner pondered the long term economic and constitutional consequences of the war against Spain:

The American people believe that they have a free country, and we are treated to grandiloquent speeches about our flag and our reputation for freedom and enlightenment. The common opinion is that we have these things because we have chosen and adopted them, because they are in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. We suppose, therefore, that we are sure to keep them and that the follies of other people are things which we can hear about with complacency. People say that this country is like no other; that its prosperity proves its exceptionality, and so on. These are popular errors which in time will meet with harsh correction. The United States is in a protected situation. It is easy to have equality where land is abundant and where the population is small. It is easy to have prosperity where a few men have a great continent to exploit. It is easy to have liberty when you have no dangerous neighbors and when the struggle for existence is easy. There are no severe penalties, under such circumstances, for political mistakes. Democracy is not then a thing to be nursed and defended, as it is in an old country like France. It is rooted and founded in the economic circumstances of the country. The orators and constitution-makers do not make democracy. They are made by it. This protected position, however, is sure to pass away. As the country fills up with population, and the task of getting a living out of the ground becomes more difficult, the struggle for existence will become harder and the competition of life more severe. Then liberty and democracy will cost something, if they are to be maintained.

Now what will hasten the day when our present advantages will wear out and when we shall come down to the conditions of the older and densely populated nations? The answer is:

war, debt, taxation, diplomacy, a grand governmental system, pomp, glory, a big army and navy, lavish expenditures, political jobbery - in a word, imperialism. In the old days the democratic masses of this country, who knew little about our modern doctrines of social philosophy, had a sound instinct on these matters, and it is no small ground of political disquietude to see it decline. They resisted every appeal to their vanity in the way of pomp and glory which they knew must be paid for. They dreaded a public debt and a standing army. They were narrow-minded and went too far with these notions, but they were, at least, right, if they wanted to strengthen democracy.

The great foe of democracy now and in the near future is plutocracy. Every year that passes brings out this antagonism more distinctly. It is to be the social war of the twentieth century. In that war militarism, expansion and imperialism will all favor plutocracy. In the first place, war and expansion will favor jobbery, both in the dependencies and at home. In the second place, they will take away the attention of the people from what the plutocrats are doing. In the third place, they wiI! cause large expenditures of the people's money, the return for which will not go into the treasury, but into the hands of a few schemers. In the fourth place, they will call for a large public debt and taxes, and these things especially tend to make men unequal, because any social burdens bear more heavily on the weak than on the strong, and so make the weak weaker and the strong stronger. Therefore expansion and imperialism are a grand onslaught on democracy. **The point which I have tried to make in this lecture is that expansion and imperialism are at war with the best traditions, principles, and interests of the American people, and that they will plunge us into a network of difficult problems and political perils, which we might have avoided, while they offer us no corresponding advantage in return.**

SOURCE

William Graham Sumner, *War and Other Essays,* ed. Albert Galloway Keller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919). Chapter: *XV: THE CONQUEST OF THE UNITED STATES BY SPAIN [1898].*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/345/225551/3705625

Quotation No. 7. Erasmus has the personification of Peace come down to earth to see with dismay how war ravages human societies (1521)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/55>]
[Date published: 23 May, 2005]

Desiderius Erasmus (1466 – 1536)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

During Erasmus' lifetime Europe was torn apart by wars, often fought in the name of religion, as the Reformation divided individuals and nations into Protestant and Catholic. Some wars were fought even by the Pope. This appalled Erasmus who truly believed that the Christian religion was a religion of peace.

THE QUOTATION

The personification of Peace visits Earth and sees with dismay how war ravages human societies. This is, of course, a thinly veiled critique by Erasmus of Europe in the early 16th century:

God made man unarmed. But anger and revenge have mended the work of God, and furnished his hands with weapons invented in hell. Christians attack christians with engines of destruction, fabricated by the devil. A cannon! a mortar! no human being could have devised them originally; they must have been suggested by the evil one. Nature, indeed, has armed lions with teeth and claws, and bulls with horns; but who ever saw them go in bodies to use their arms for mutual destruction? What man ever saw so small a number as even ten lions congregated to fight ten bulls, and drawn up in battle array? But how often have twenty thousand christians met an equal number on the same plain, all prepared to shoot each other, through the heart, or to plunge the sword or bayonet through each other's bowels. So little account do they make of hurting their brethren, that they have not the smallest scruple to spill every drop of blood in their bodies. Beasts of the forest; your contests are at least excusable, and sometimes amiable; ye fight only when driven to madness by hunger, or to defend your young ones; but as for those who call themselves your lords, (men and christians) the faintest shadow of an affront is sufficient to involve them in all the horrors of premeditated war.

If the lower orders of the people were to act in this manner, some apology might be found in their supposed ignorance; if very young men were to act in this manner, the inexperience of youth might be pleaded in extenuation; if the poor laity only were concerned, the frailty of the agents might lessen the atrocity of the action: but the very reverse of this is the truth. The seeds of war are chiefly sown by those very people whose wisdom and moderation, characteristic of their rank and station, ought to compose and assuage the impetuous passions of the people.

The people, the ignoble vulgar, despised as they are, are the very persons who originally raise great and fair cities to their proud eminence; who conduct the commercial business of them entirely; and, by their excellent management, fill them with opulence. Into these cities, after they are raised and enriched by plebeians, creep the satraps and grandees, like so many drones into a hive; pilfer what was earned by others' industry; and thus, what was accumulated by the labour of the many, is dissipated by the profligacy of

the few; what was built by plebeians on upright foundations, is leveled to the ground by cruelty and royal patrician injustice.

If the military transactions of old time are not worth remembrance, let him who can bear the loathsome employ, only call to mind the wars of the last twelve years; let him attentively consider the causes of them all, and he will find them all to have been undertaken for the sake of kings; all of them carried on with infinite detriment to the people; while, in most instances, the people had not the smallest concern either in their origin or their issue.

SOURCE

Desiderius Erasmus, *The Complaint of Peace. Translated from the Querela Pacis (A.D. 1521) of Erasmus* (Chicago: Open Court, 1917). Chapter: *THE COMPLAINT OF PEACE. (Peace speaks in her own person.)*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/87/5195/682766>

Quotation No. 6. Ludwig von Mises laments the passing of the Age of Limited Warfare and the coming of Mass Destruction in the Age of Statism and Conquest (1949)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/27>]
[Date published: 1 November, 2004]

Ludwig von Mises (1881 – 1973)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

Mises had the very great misfortune of living through the two world wars of the 20th century and seeing first hand the impact war had on the destruction of life and property. During the First World War he worked as an economic advisor to various private and government bodies in Austria on banking matters and could thus see the terrible inflations which ruined eastern and central Europe, especially in Russia and Germany. During the Second World War he was able to seek refuge in Switzerland before coming to the United States. The problems of war and inflation were a central concern in all his writings.

THE QUOTATION

Published in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Mises' magnum opus, *Human Action* (1949) contained a chapter on "The Economics of War" in which he laments the killing of innocents:

The liberal philosophy of Bentham and Bastiat had not yet completed its work of removing trade barriers and government meddling with business when the counterfeit theology of the divine state began to take effect. Endeavors to improve the conditions of wage earners and small farmers by government decree made it necessary to loosen more and more the ties which connected each country's domestic economy with those of other countries. Economic nationalism, the necessary complement of domestic interventionism, hurts the interests of foreign peoples and thus creates international conflict. It suggests the idea of amending this unsatisfactory state of affairs by war. Why should a powerful nation tolerate the challenge of a less powerful nation? Is it not insolence on the part of small Laputania to injure the citizens of big Ruritania by customs, migration barriers, foreign exchange control, quantitative trade restrictions, and expropriation of Ruritanian investments in Laputania? Would it not be easy for the army of Ruritania to crush Laputania's contemptible forces?

Such was the ideology of the German, Italian, and Japanese warmongers. It must be admitted that they were consistent from the point of view of the new "unorthodox" teachings. Interventionism generates economic nationalism, and economic nationalism generates bellicosity. If men and commodities are prevented from crossing the borderlines, why should not the armies try to pave the way for them?

From the day when Italy, in 1911, fell upon Turkey, fighting was continual. There was almost always shooting somewhere in the world. The peace treaties concluded were virtually merely armistice agreements. Moreover they had to do only with the armies of the great powers. Some of the smaller nations were always at war. In addition there were no less pernicious civil wars and revolutions.

How far we are today from the rules of international law developed in the age of limited warfare! Modern war is merciless, it does not spare pregnant women or infants; it is indiscriminate killing and destroying. It does not respect the rights of neutrals. Millions are killed, enslaved, or expelled from the dwelling places in which their ancestors lived for centuries. Nobody can foretell what will happen in the next chapter of this endless struggle.

This has little to do with the atomic bomb. The root of the evil is not the construction of new, more dreadful weapons. It is the spirit of conquest. It is probable that scientists will discover some methods of defense against the atomic bomb. But this will not alter things, it will merely prolong for a short time the process of the complete destruction of civilization.

Modern civilization is a product of the philosophy of laissez faire. It cannot be preserved under the ideology of government omnipotence. Statolatry owes much to the doctrines of Hegel. However, one may pass over many of Hegel's inexcusable faults, for Hegel also coined the phrase "the futility of victory" (die Ohnmacht des Sieges). To defeat the aggressors is not enough to make peace durable. The main thing is to discard the ideology that generates war.

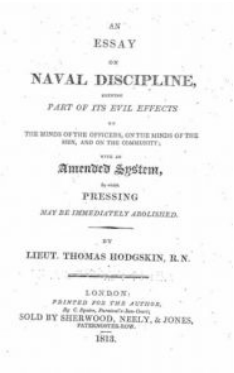
SOURCE

Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics*, in 4 vols., ed. Bettina Bien Greaves (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007). Vol. 3. Chapter: *4.: The Futility of War.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1895/110729/2302018>

Quotation No. 5. Thomas Hodgskin on the Suffering of those who had been Impressed or Conscripted into the despotism of the British Navy (1813)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/17>]
[Date published: 23 August, 2004]


AN
ESSAY
ON
NAVAL DISCIPLINE,
PART OF ITS EVIL EFFECTS
ON
THE MINDS OF THE OFFICERS, ON THE MINDS OF THE MEN, AND ON THE COMMUNITY;
WITH AN
Amended System,
IN WHICH
PRESSING
MAY BE IMMEDIATELY ABOLISHED.
BY
LIEUT. THOMAS HODGSKIN, R.N.
LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
SOLD BY SHERWOOD, NEELY, & JONES,
1813.

Thomas Hodgskin (1787 – 1869)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

One needs to remember that this angry tract in defence of the rights of seamen was written during the Napoleonic War and placed the author under the considerable risk of himself being disciplined for treason by the British Navy. Although he was punished by being passed over for promotion he escaped having the more serious charge leveled against him.

THE QUOTATION

Hodgskin was forced to leave the British Navy after being physically punished for complaining about the brutal treatment of sailors who been impressed (conscripted):

To display to the public the abuses existing in the navy, has lately, to me, become an imperative duty: for, the absurdity of its laws and customs has deeply injured myself. My opinion of these is so irretrievably bad, that, in common with many others, I feel no shame at having fallen under their lash,—and but that they have deprived me of the good opinion of society, which is too generally built upon success; but that they have partially deprived me of the esteem of my *friends*; and, but that they have completely excluded me from that road to fame and fortune, the navy, in which my whole life has been past, I should not have felt *punishment* an injury. Having received so deep an injury from these laws, it has become a positive duty in me to attempt to alter *them* through the medium of public *opinion*; a duty equally strong with that which every man thinks it right to practice to relieve himself from a physical pain, by every possible means. When I look around *me* in society, and see the nations of the earth most celebrated for the rigour and despotism of their government, groaning under the most grievous *calamities*, while ours from her freedom has had safety ensured to her; can these calamities be possibly traced to any other cause than this despotism, which has destroyed every manly feeling; which, by unnerving the arm of the poor man (the legitimate defender of his *country)*, has opened every pass to its enemies. Can the rise of despotism in any society be ever so well *resisted* as at first.—The first step it takes gives it additional power to take a second. It goes on thus increasing, till men's opinions are bound up in its sanctity, and then it is *irresistible*…

I have seen the discipline of the French armies and I have read of the despotism of the French emperor; I have witnessed, and heard of the calamities inflicted on negroes; but with the exceptions of our seamen being better fed, better clothed, and not allowed to be murdered,—what I have seen them suffer, exceeds the cruelties of Buonaparte to his army, exceeds all that the negroes have had inflicted on them: nothing could support them under their sufferings, but a great and noble consciousness, that they are the saviours of their country—that it is visibly their efforts alone, which prevent despotism from

overshadowing the earth, and destroying that liberty they were in early life taught to indulge a love of, and which they still regard as sacred, though no longer permitted to taste its blessings.

To rescue our seamen from these cruelties, is, therefore, becoming every man of humanity; and, as while men labour under despotic oppression, they never can think well of themselves—to release our seamen from it, is the peculiar business of every advocate of virtue; for the first step to dignity of action is, that men should think well of *themselves*.

To abolish pressing, would be worthy all the eloquence, and all the abilities of a *Chatham*; it is even more worthy the exertion of Lord Holland, than the laws on libel — it demands more of the morality and patriotism of Mr. Wilberforce, than the abolition of the slave trade; its bad effects were confined to a few, and it was a dreadful stigma on the country. Pressing is a greater stigma, and has a dreadful effect on the morals of all.

To abolish it, strictly accords with that excellent sentiment of Mr. Stephens, which said, that to suppose men degraded, made them, in fact, become so; and thus they were made a disgrace to that society, which, but for a cruel injustice, they might have adorned…

SOURCE

Thomas Hodgskin, *An Essay on Naval Discipline, Shewing Part of its evil Effects on the Minds of the Officers, on the Minds of the Men, and on the Community; with an Amended System, by which Pressing may be immediately abolished*, by Lieut. Thomas Hodgskin, R.N. (London: Printed for the Author, by C. Squire, Furnival's-Inn-Court, sold by Sherwood, Neely & Jones, Paternoster-Row 1813). Chapter: *PREFACE.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/322/37793/693958>

Quotation No. 4. Robert Nisbet on the Shock the Founding Fathers would feel if they could see the current size of the Military Establishment and the National Government (1988)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/255>]
[Date published: 19 July, 2004]

Robert A. Nisbet (1913 – 1996)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

It is interesting to compare Nisbet's thoughts with the very similar ones expressed by the Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises on how war, inflation, and revolution in the 20th century have so greatly expanded the powers of the state to the detriment of individual liberty.

THE QUOTATION

In 1988 Nisbet gave a series of lectures to celebrate the bicentennial of the American Constitution. He reflected on what the Framers would be most struck by in America today and concluded that they would be incredulous at the staggering size of the military establishment and the Leviathan-like size of the national government:

It is tempting in this year of the bicentennial of the Constitution to speculate on the probable reactions of the Framers to the product of their labors and aspirations as it stands today in the world two full centuries after its inception. Such speculation need not be altogether fanciful. Some constitutional lawyers speak of recovering the "original intent" of the Framers, a not impossible feat given the clarity of the document itself and the abundance of ancillary sources of the Framers' views on government. If original intent can be reasonably retrieved after two hundred years, why not probable reaction to the present age in America?

What would the Framers be most struck by in America today? I mean after they had recovered from the shock of seeing clean, strong, white teeth instead of decayed yellow stumps in the mouths of their descendants; after they had assimilated the fact of the astounding number of Americans who were neither crippled, disease-wasted, nor pockmarked from smallpox; and, of course, after they had taken rapt eyes off the high-speed vehicles on the streets? After these astonishments, what reactions might there be to the political and cultural scene?

Three aspects of the present age in America would surely draw their immediate, concerned, and perhaps incredulous attention.

First, the prominence of war in American life since 1914, amounting to a virtual Seventy-Five Years War, and with this the staggering size of the American military establishment since World War II. The Framers had relied on two broad oceans for the license to draft the most nonmilitary constitution imaginable.

Second, the Leviathan-like presence of the national government in the affairs of states, towns, and cities, and in the lives, cradle to grave, of individuals. The Framers had worked most diligently to prevent any future hypertrophy of the federal government.They had particularly disliked the sprawling bureaucracies of Europe in their day.

Third, the number of Americans who seem only loosely attached to groups and values such as kinship, community, and property, and whose lives are so plainly governed by the cash nexus.

In the pages following, I have enlarged upon these three aspects of the present scene in America.

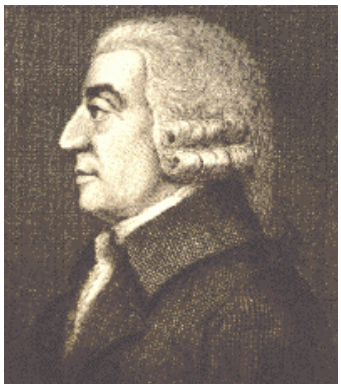
SOURCE

Robert A. Nisbet, *The Present Age: Progress and Anarchy in Modern America* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2003). Chapter: *Foreword.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/876/77063/1863652>

Quotation No. 3. Adam Smith on the Sympathy one feels for those Vanquished in a battle rather than for the Victors (1762)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/252>]
[Date published: 21 June, 2004]



Adam Smith (1723 – 1790)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

This passage builds upon the ideas contained in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) where Smith shows that his interest goes far beyond just matters of justice or economic efficiency but extends equally to the issue of having sympathy towards the suffering of others.

THE QUOTATION

This passage comes from Lecture 16 of Smith's *Lectures on Rhetoric* which he gave at the University of Glasgow in 1762:

Whence this superior influence of uneasy sensations proceeds. Whether from their being less common and so more distinguishd from the ordinary pitch of human happiness by being greatly below it, than our most agreable perceptions are by rising above it; or whether it is thus ordered by the constitution of our nature to the end that the uneasiness of such sensations as accompany what tends to our prejudice might rouse us to be active in warding it off, can not be easily determind: For tho pleasant Sensations from what is of advantage might perhaps[s] be dispensed with, and no great prejudice thereby acrue to our happiness, Yet it seems absolutely necessary that some considerable degree of uneasiness should attend what is hurtfull; for without this we should soon in all probability be altogether destroyed. But whatever be the cause of this Phenomenon it is an undoubted fact that those actions affect us in the most sensible manner, and make the deepest impression, which give us a considerable degree of Pain and uneasiness. This is the case not only with regard to our own private actions, but with those of others. Not only in our own case, missfortunate affairs chiefly affect us; but **it is with the misfortunes of others that we most commonly as well as most deeply sympathise. —A Historian who related a battle and the effects attending, if he was no way interested would naturally dwell more on the misery and lamentations of the vanquished than on the triumph and exultations of the Victors.**

SOURCE

Adam Smith, *Lectures On Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed. J. C. Bryce, vol. IV of the *Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985). Chapter: *Lecture. 16th.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/202/55530/917859>

Quotation No. 2. Hugo Grotius on sparing Civilian Property from Destruction in Time of War (1625)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/247>]
[Date published: 17 May, 2004]

Hugo Grotius (1583 – 1645)

ABOUT THIS QUOTATION:

The OLL has two editions of Grotius book on *The Laws of War and Peace* online. The 1901 edition was published at a time when a number of Conventions had been convened to modernise the laws of war and to help ward off an expected conflict between the Great Powers of Europe (which nevertheless took place in 1914). This edition contained an introduction by David J. Hill who was Assistant Secretary of State in the U.S., thus giving the project the stamp of approval of the American government. The second edition we have online is a 3 volume edition published in 2005 by Richard Tuck. It is now the definitive scholarly edition of Grotius' work and is part of a 40 volume series on *The Enlightenment and Natural Law*. Having lived through the early years of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) which devastated so much of central and northern Europe it is not surprising that Grotius would be concerned about the effects of war on innocent civilians and how best to minimise this impact.

THE QUOTATION

This passage comes from Hugo Grotius, *The Law of War and Peace* (1625), Book III Chapter 12 "On Moderation iin Despoiling an Enemy's Country" (1625):

I. ONE of the three following cases is requisite to justify any one in destroying what BELONGS to another: there must be either such a necessity, as at the original institution of property might be supposed to form an exception, as if for instance any one should throw the sword of another into a river, to prevent a madman from using it to his destruction: still according to the true principles maintained in a former part of this work he will be bound to repair the loss: or there must be some debt, arising from the non-performance of an engagement, where the waste committed is considered as a satisfaction for that debt: or there must have been some aggressions, for which such destruction is only an adequate punishment.Now, driving off some of our cattle, or burning a few of our houses, can never be pleaded as a sufficient and justifiable motive for laying waste the whole of an enemy's kingdom. Polybius saw this in its proper light, observing, that vengeance in war should not be carried to its extreme, nor extend any further than was necessary to make an aggressor atone justly for his offence. And it is upon these motives, and within these limits alone, that punishment can be inflicted. But except where prompted to it by motives of great utility, it is folly, and worse than folly, wantonly to hurt another.But upon duly and impartially weighing the matter, such acts are oftener regarded in an odious light, than considered as the dictates of prudent and necessary counsels. For the most urgent and justifiable motives are seldom of long continuance, and are often succeeded by weightier motives of a more humane description…V. **There are some things of such a nature, as to contribute,**

no way, to the support and prolongation of war: things which reason itself requires to be spared even during the heat and continuance of war. Polybius calls it brutal rage and madness to destroy things, the destruction of which does not in the least tend to impair an enemy's strength, nor to increase that of the destroyer: Such are Porticos, Temples, statues, and all other elegant works and monuments of art. Cicero commends Marcellus for sparing the public and private edifices of Syracuse, as if he had come with his army to protect THEM, rather than to take the place by storm.VI. As this rule of moderation is observed towards other ornamental works of art, for the reasons before stated, there is still greater reason, why it should be obeyed in respect to things devoted to the purposes of religion. For although such things, or edifices, being the property of the state may, according to the law of nations, be with impunity demolished, yet as they contribute nothing to aggravate the calamities, or retard the successes of war, it is a mark of reverence to divine things to spare them, and all that is connected therewith: and more especially should this rule be adhered to among nations, worshipping the same God according to the same fundamental laws, although differing from each other by slight shades of variation in their rights and opinions. Thucydides says that it was a law among the Greeks of his time, in all their invasions of each other's territories, to forbear touching the edifices of religion: and Livy likewise observes that, upon the destruction of Alba by the Romans, the temples of the Gods were spared.VII. What has been said of the sacred edifices of religion applies also to monuments raised in honour of the dead, unnecessarily to disturb whose ashes in their repose bespeaks a total disregard to the laws and ties of our common humanity.

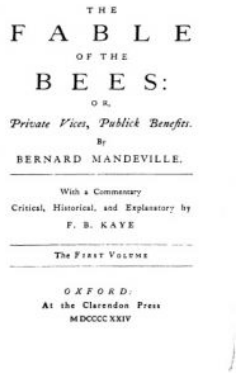
SOURCE

Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace, including the Law of Nature and of Nations,* translated from the Original Latin of Grotius, with Notes and Illustrations from Political and Legal Writers, by A.C. Campbell, A.M. with an Introduction by David J. Hill (New York: M. Walter Dunne, 1901). Chapter: *CHAPTER XII.: On Moderation in Despoiling An Enemy's Country.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/553/90813/2054004>

Quotation No. 1. Bernard Mandeville on how the Hardships and Fatigues of War bear most heavily on the "working slaving People" (1732)

[View this quote online <http://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/245>]
[Date published: 3 May, 2004]


THE
FABLE
OF THE
BEES:
OR,
Private Vices, Publick Benefits.
By
BERNARD MANDEVILLE.
With a Commentary
Critical, Historical, and Explanatory by
F. B. KAYE
The First Volume
OXFORD:
At the Clarendon Press
MDCCCC XXIV

Bernard Mandeville (1670 – 1733)

About this Quotation:

The War in Afghanistan began in October 2001 soon after planning for the design and building of the OLL began. It was soon followed by the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 just a year before the launch of the OLL website in March 2004. So it is not surprising that war was at the back of the minds of the editors when the site was opened to the public. So Mandeville's book (another title published by Liberty Fund) with his thoughtful reflections about the nature of "private vice and publick benefit" and the need for heavy taxation on the ordinary citizens to pay for war, were very appropriate.

The Quotation

This passage comes from Remark L by Bernard Mandeville in *The Fable of the Bees or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (1732):

But let us once suppose that the Ease and Pleasures the Grandees and the rich People of every great Nation live in, render them unfit to endure Hardships, and undergo the Toils of War. I'll allow that most of the Common Council of the City would make but very in-different Foot-Soldiers; and I believe heartily, that if your Horse was to be compos'd of Aldermen, and such as most of them are, a small Artillery of Squibs would be sufficient to rout them. But what have the Aldermen, the Common-Council, or indeed all People of any Substance to do with the War, but to pay Taxes? **The Hardships and Fatigues of War that are personally suffer'd, fall upon them that bear the Brunt of every Thing, the meanest Indigent Part of the Nation, the working slaving People**: For how excessive soever the Plenty and Luxury of a Nation may be, some Body must do the Work, Houses and Ships must be built, Merchandizes must be remov'd, and the Ground till'd. Such a Variety of Labours in every great Nation require a vast Multitude, in which there are always loose, idle, extravagant Fellows enough to spare for an Army; and those that are robust enough to Hedge and Ditch, Plow and Thrash, or else not too much enervated to be Smiths, Carpenters, Sawyers, Cloth-workers, Porters or Carmen, will always be strong and hardy enough in a Campaign or two to make good Soldiers, who, where good Orders are kept, have seldom so much Plenty and Superfluity come to their Share as to do them any hurt.

Source

Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits,* 2 vols. With a Commentary Critical, Historical, and Explanatory by F.B. Kaye (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1988). Vol. 1. Chapter: *REMARKS.*

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/846/66867/1631136>

Further Information

Further Reading

For further reading see the complete collection of 407 "Quotations about Liberty and Power" at the OLL website:

Sorted chronologically:

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=quotes.php&Itemid=275&sort=date>

Sorted by theme:

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=quotes.php&Itemid=275>

Subject Area: War and Peace <oll.libertyfund.org/collection/57>.

"The distinctive principle of Western social philosophy is individualism. It aims at the creation of a sphere in which the individual is free to think, to choose, and to act without being restrained by the interference of the social apparatus of coercion and oppression, the State."

[Ludwig von Mises, "Liberty and Property" (1958)]

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A subset of *The Best of the OLL* is *The Best of Bastiat* which is a collection of some of the best material in Liberty Fund's 6 volume edition of *The Collected Works of Frédéric Bastiat* (2011-). The full list can be found here <oll.libertyfund.org/title/2477>.

Another useful sampling of the contents of the OLL website is the collection of weekly *Quotations about Liberty and Power* which are organized by themes such as Free Trade, Money and Banking, Natural Rights, and so on. See for example, Richard Cobden's "I have a dream" speech <oll.libertyfund.org/quote/326>.

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The *Online Library of Liberty* is a project of Liberty Fund, Inc., a private educational foundation established in 1960 to encourage the study of the ideal of a society of free and responsible individuals. The OLL website has a large collection of books and study guides about individual liberty, limited constitutional government, the free market, and peace.

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