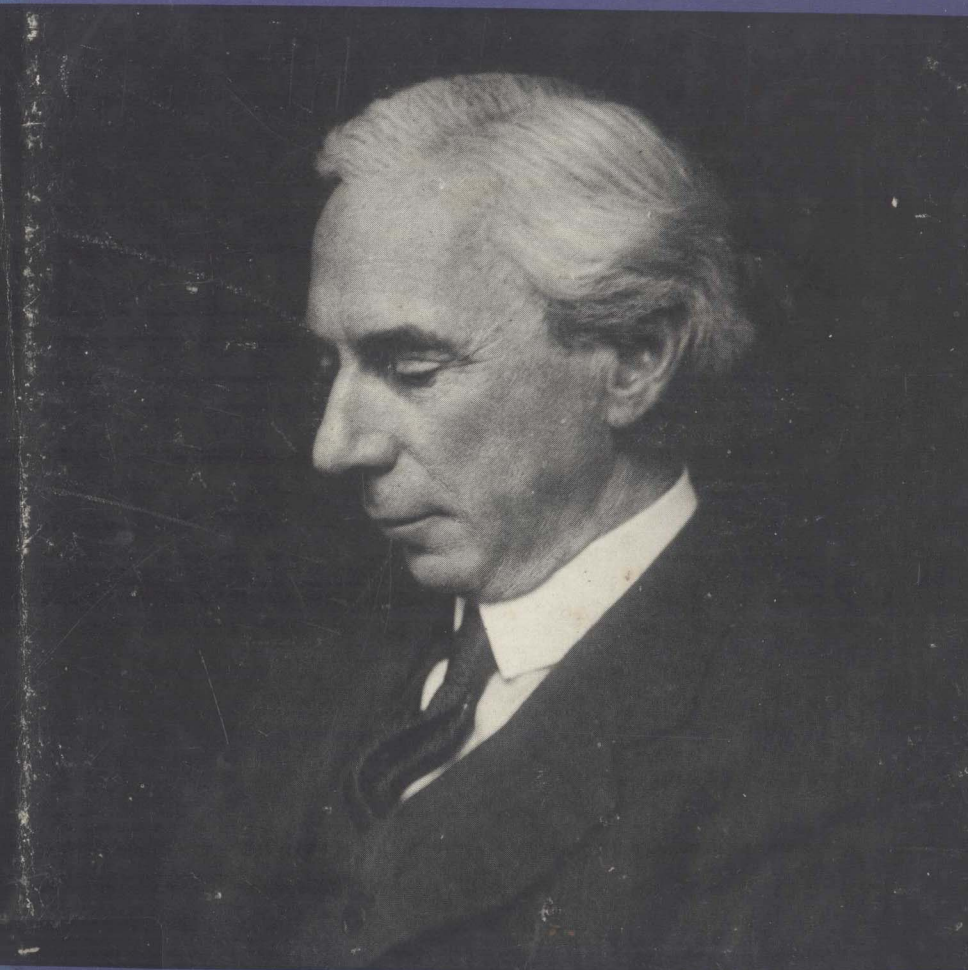


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**JUSTICE IN  
WAR~TIME**



**Bertrand Russell**

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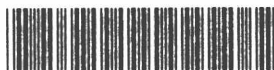
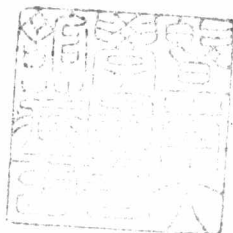
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# JUSTICE IN WAR TIME

by Bertrand Russell



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SPOKESMAN BOOKS

First Edition 1916  
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### SPOKESMAN BOOKS

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## **JUSTICE IN WARTIME**



## PUBLISHERS' PREFACE TO THE 1917 EDITION

[Bertrand Russell's activities against war, and his theories on pacifism, as expressed in his book, *Justice in War-Time*, have resulted in a military order, issued September 1, 1918, by his own cousin, forbidding him to enter any restricted territory or fortified district.

Mr. Russell has published the following in his own defence:]

### A PERSONAL STATEMENT

On Friday, September 1st, two men from Scotland Yard, acting on behalf of the War Office, served a War Office Order on me, forbidding me to enter any prohibited area without permission in writing from the competent Military Authority. (Prohibited areas include practically all places near the sea, including many whole counties.) On September 11th, in reply to representations, an official letter was sent to me by order of the Army Council, containing the following paragraph:

"I am further to state that the Council would be prepared to issue instructions for the withdrawal of the order if you, on your part, would give an undertaking not to continue a propaganda which, if successful, would, in their opinion, militate to some extent against the effective prosecution of the war."

My profession hitherto has been that of a lecturer on mathematical logic. The Government have forbidden me to fulfil an engagement to practise this profession at Harvard, and the Council of Trinity College have forbidden me to practise it in Cambridge. Under these circumstances it became necessary to me to lecture on some more popular subject, and I prepared a course on the Philosophical Principles of Politics, to be delivered in various provincial towns. As three of

these towns are in prohibited areas, I cannot go to them without permission in writing from the War Office. In reply to a request for this permission, I was informed that I must submit the lectures to the War Office censorship. I replied that this was impossible, as they were to be spoken, not read; but I sent the syllabus of the course.

In reply, I received a letter, dated Sept. 13, (1916) acknowledging receipt of the syllabus of lectures, and stating that "in the absence of further details," it was "impossible to advise the Army Council whether they might properly be given during the war." The letter further stated that "such topics as 'The Sphere of Compulsion in Good Government' and 'The Limits of Allegiance to the State' would, in particular, seem to require very careful handling if they are not to be mistaken for propaganda of the type which it is desired to postpone till after the conclusion of hostilities." It concluded by offering to give permission for the lectures if I would give "an honourable undertaking" not "to use them as a vehicle for propaganda."

My proposed course of lectures on "The World as it can be made" is not intended to deal with the immediate issues raised by the war; there will be nothing about the diplomacy preceding the war, about conscientious objectors, about the kind of peace to be desired, or even about the general ethics of war. On all these topics I have expressed myself often already. My intention is to take the minds of my hearers off the questions of the moment, and to suggest the kind of hopes and ideals that ought to inspire reconstruction after the war.

But when I am requested by the military authorities

to give an "honourable undertaking," as regards my lectures, that I will not "use them as a vehicle for propaganda," I am quite unable to do so, for the following reasons:

First and foremost, because I cannot acknowledge the right of the War Office to prevent me from expressing my opinions on political subjects. If I say anything which they think prejudicial to the conduct of the war, they can imprison me under the Defence of the Realm Act, but that is a proceeding to which I am not a party, and for which I have no responsibility. If, however, I enter into a bargain by which I secure certain advantages in return for a promise, I am precluded from further protest against their tyranny. Now it is just as imperative a duty to me to fight against tyranny at home as it is to others to fight against the Germans abroad. I will not, on any consideration, surrender one particle of spiritual liberty. Physical liberty can be taken from a man, but spiritual liberty is his birthright, of which all the armies and governments of the world are powerless to deprive him without his co-operation.

Apart from this argument of principle, which is hardly of a kind to appeal to militarists, there are other more practical reasons for not giving such an undertaking as is required. My lectures will be spoken, not read, and will no doubt be followed by questions. It is impossible to be absolutely certain what one will say when one speaks extempore; and it would be obviously absurd, in reply to an awkward question, to say "I am under an honourable undertaking not to answer that question." Even if these difficulties could be overcome, it is utterly impossible to know what



would be covered by such an undertaking, since there is no precise definition of the propaganda to be avoided, and no indication as to whether only certain conclusions are forbidden, or also the premises from which they can be deduced. May I say that I consider homicide usually regrettable? If so, since the majority of homicides occur in war, I have uttered a pacifist sentiment. May I say that I have a respect for the ethical teaching of Christ? If I do, the War Office may tell me that I am praising conscientious objectors. May I say that I do not hold Latimer and Ridley guilty of grave moral turpitude because they broke the law? Or would such a statement be prejudicial to discipline in His Majesty's Forces? To such questions there is no end.

If the authorities at the War Office were capable of philosophical reflection, they would see an interesting refutation of militarist beliefs in the terror with which a handful of pacifists appears to have inspired them. They have on their side the armed forces, the law, the press, and a vast majority of the public. The views which we advocate are held by few, and expressed by still fewer. To meet the material force on their side we have only the power of the spoken or written word, of the appeal from passion to reason, from fear to hope, from hate to love. Nevertheless, they fear us—such is the power of spiritual things even in the present welter of brute force.

BERTRAND RUSSELL.

LONDON PRESS COMMENTS

*"Daily News,"* September 2, 1916:

". . . The Government appear to be using a

power given for purely military purposes to compass an end which is in no conceivable sense military. It is impossible to believe that Mr. Russell's lectures in themselves could have been prejudicial to any military object. If graver suspicions are entertained against him, the course pursued was even more manifestly foolish and unjust. In that case, evidence should have been procured of the charges against him, and he should have been arrested and put on his trial. Instead the Government have preferred to treat an Englishman of distinction as though he were an alien of suspicious antecedents, presuming apparently on the unpopularity of his views to protect their conduct from inconvenient criticism. It is a most alarming culmination to a process which has been becoming for long increasingly unmistakable."

*"Manchester Guardian,"* September 2, 1916:

"The order issued forbidding the Hon. Bertrand Russell from going into any 'prohibited area' would be a little laughable if it were not also decidedly humiliating. What object it can be supposed to serve we have not the remotest idea . . . . If only Providence would favour the War Office in dealing with such matters with a touch of humour, or if it cannot spare it, a modicum of common sense!"

September 5, 1916, H. W. Massingham in a letter to the *"Times"*:

"It is a gross libel, and an advertisement to the world that the administration of the Defence of the Realm Regulations is in the hands of men who do not understand their business. Incidentally, their action deprives Mr. Russell, already debarred from entering

the United States, of the power of earning his livelihood by arranged lectures on subjects unconnected with the war. The *Times* is the most active supporter of that war; but its support is intelligent, and it speaks as the mouthpiece of the country's intelligence as well as of its force. May I therefore appeal to it to use its great influence to discourage the persecution of an Englishman of whose accomplishments and character the nation may well be proud, even in the hour when his conscientious conclusions are not accepted by it?"

*"Westminster Gazette,"* September 5, 1916:

"We sympathise strongly with the protest made by Mr. W. H. Massingham in a letter to the *Times* against the order forbidding Mr. Bertrand Russell to reside in any military area in the United Kingdom. We need not say that Mr. Bertrand Russell's views regarding the war are not ours, but we recognise in him a man of high intellectual distinction, and one who, however wrongheaded he may be about the war, and its origins, would be incapable of any such action as is contemplated in the prohibitions of the Defence of the Realm Act. In this case a wrong use is being made of the powers of the military authorities to persecute a man who is capable of high service to the nation in literary and scientific fields."

*"Daily News,"* September 16, 1916:

" . . . Now there may be a case for forbidding Mr. Russell to continue his propaganda. There may be a still better case for prosecuting him—a much honester way of dealing with him. But, if his activities are a peril to the State, it is ridiculous to pretend that, while perilous in maritime towns, they will be

harmless further inland—a danger in Brighton but not in Birmingham, in Hull but not in Halifax. The official mind as it has been revealed in the explanation—and, the other day, in the ‘rounding up’ explanation—would have bewildered even so cunning a psychologist as William James. The one thing that is painfully clear in the whole business is that the War Office is putting the Defence of the Realm Act to irritating and arbitrary uses such as the House of Parliament never intended, and such as are indefensible on grounds of common sense.”

The “*Nation*,” September 16, 1916:

“ . . . . A second example lies before us of this military attempt at the destruction of free thought and of its legitimate and necessary means of expression. We referred last week to the War Office interdict, the object of which is to prohibit Mr. Bertrand Russell from delivering a series of arranged lectures on political philosophy . . . the War Office came to the conclusion that Mr. Russell’s treatment of them might be regarded as ‘propaganda.’ . . . Therefore it decided that unless Mr. Russell would pledge himself to abstain from using these ancient intellectual symbols as a ‘vehicle for propaganda,’ he should be forbidden to deal with them at all. There indeed the interrogation stops. These military metaphysicians omit to specify what ‘propaganda’ they wish to stop. Probably the propaganda of Thought, which has never been popular at the War Office. The nation which rushed into the fray with the one watchword of ‘freedom’ on its lips is to sit mumchance, when—looking

through and beyond the mists of war—its ablest and most honest minds seek to find some foothold for its thinking. Or, if it thinks, it must only think one way.”

March 1, 1917.

THE PUBLISHERS.

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE following essays, of which all except the last two have appeared in various magazines, were written at different times during the course of the war, and are not perhaps wholly consistent in their expectations as to the future, or in their view as to the attitude of the ordinary citizen towards war. In such matters, the development of events inevitably somewhat modifies first impressions. The view that the bulk of the population is naturally pacific, and is only incited to war by politicians and journalists, is widely held among pacifists, but is vehemently rejected by the more bellicose, who point out that men have an instinct of pugnacity, which demands war from time to time. I think it is true that many men have an instinct towards war, but unless it is roused by its appropriate stimulus it may well remain completely latent. The instinct, and the machinations of war-mongers, are both needed to bring about war; if either were coped with, the other would be no longer operative for evil. In the following essays I have dealt sometimes with the one, sometimes with the other; but both are essential factors in the problem, and neither can be neglected by any prudent friend of peace.

The first of these essays, which was written before the Bryce Report appeared, deals in part with the question of atrocities. Nothing in that report tends to invalidate the conclusion reached in the article,

namely: "No doubt both German and Russian atrocities have occurred. But it is certain that they have been far less numerous, and (for the most part) less unnatural, than they are almost universally believed to have been." Those who can recall what was believed in England in the early months of the war will acknowledge that the Bryce Report, bad as it is, tends to show that the atrocities which may be called "unnatural" have been much fewer than most English people had supposed. I think it should be added that some of the cases mentioned in the Bryce Report are admittedly based on evidence such as would not be accepted in a criminal prosecution. I have not seen the German Reports on supposed Russian atrocities, but they, if they are honest, presumably show exaggeration in what Germans believed about Russians. If the atrocities, however, were as bad as was believed, that can only increase our horror of war. It is war that produces atrocities, and every fresh atrocity is a fresh argument for peace.

The last essay is an attempt to show how England might have averted the war by a wiser policy during the ten years preceding its outbreak. To publish, in war-time, a criticism of the policy of one's own Government, is an act which will be thought by many to be unpatriotic. My own deliberate belief, however, is that what I have to say is more likely to benefit England than to injure it, in so far as it produces any effect at all. As some readers might misunderstand my motives, I have thought it well to state them by way of introduction.

I consider that either a serious weakening of England, France, and Italy, or a serious strengthening

of Germany, would be a great misfortune for the civilisation of the world. I wish ardently to see the Germans expelled from France and Belgium, and led to feel that the war has been a misfortune for them as well as for the Allies. These things I desire as strongly as the noisiest of our patriots. But there are other things, forgotten by most men in the excitement of battle, which seem to me of even greater importance. It is important that peace should come as soon as possible, lest European civilisation should perish out of the world. It is important that, after the peace, the nations should feel that degree of mutual respect which will make co-operation possible. It is important that England, the birthplace of liberty and the home of chivalrous generosity, should adopt in the future a policy worthy of itself, embodying its best, not deviously deceptive towards the hopes of its more humane citizens. Because I prize civilisation, because I long for the restoration of the European community of nations, but above all because I love England, and because I have hopes in regard to England which I should feel Utopian in regard to Germany: because of these fears and these hopes, I wish to make the English people aware of the crimes that have been committed in its name, to recall it to the temper in which peace can be made and preserved, and to point the way to a better national pride than that of dominion.

The British public, under the influence of an excited Press, believes that any criticism of the past actions of our Foreign Office tends to interfere with our success in the war. This, I feel convinced, is an entire delusion. What has interfered with our success is,



first and foremost, the supreme organizing capacity of the Germans. The faults, on our side, which have retarded our victory, have been lack of ability in some of the higher commands, lack of co-ordination in the efforts to produce munitions, jobbery and family influence in Army appointments instead of the Napoleonic maxim of "*la carrière ouverte aux talents*", belief, on the part of our politicians, in expedients and clever words rather than a determined, concentrated vigorous effort of will. Germans who flatter themselves with hopes of England's decadence forget that we have exhibited exactly similar faults in all previous wars, and yet have been invariably victorious except against our kith and kin in America. There has been no failure of energy, courage and self-sacrifice on the part of the nation, but there has been failure on the part of its rulers. It is these same rulers, not the nation, whose past foreign policy I wish to call in question. And I do this in the hope that, after the war, England, together with France and America, may lead the world in a more just, a more humane, and a more pacific way of dealing with international problems.

It will be said in England that such criticisms as I have made of our Foreign Office are calculated to estrange the sympathy of Americans. I believe this to be an entire mistake. Both England and Germany, in presenting their case to the American public, have erred in claiming a complete sinlessness which is not given to mortals, and is not credible except to the eyes of self-love. Both have sinned, and any citizen of a neutral country will take this for granted before beginning to investigate the facts. No history of