

War, Peace, and the State By Murray N. Rothbard

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The libertarian movement has been chided by William F. Buckley, Jr., for failing to use its "strategic intelligence" in facing the major problems of our time. We have, indeed, been too often prone to "pursue our busy little seminars on whether or not to demunicipalize the garbage collectors" (as Buckley has contemptuously written), while ignoring and failing to apply libertarian theory to the most vital problem of our time: war and peace. There *is* a sense in which libertarians have been utopian rather than strategic in their thinking, with a tendency to divorce the ideal system which we envisage from the realities of the world in which we live. In short, too many of us have divorced theory from practice, and have then been content to hold the pure libertarian society as an abstract ideal for some remotely future time, while in the concrete world of today we follow unthinkingly the orthodox "conservative" line. To live liberty, to begin the hard but essential strategic struggle of changing the unsatisfactory world of today in the direction of our ideals, we must realize and demonstrate to the world that libertarian theory can be brought sharply to bear upon all of the world's crucial problems. By coming to grips with these problems, we can demonstrate that libertarianism is not just a beautiful ideal somewhere on Cloud Nine, but a tough-minded body of truths that enables us to take our stand and to cope with the whole host of issues of our day.

Let us then, by all means, use our strategic intelligence. Although, when he sees the result, Mr. Buckley might well wish that we had stayed in the realm of garbage collection. Let us construct a libertarian theory of war and peace.

The fundamental axiom of libertarian theory is that no one may threaten or commit violence ("aggress") against another man's person or property. Violence may be employed only against the man who commits such violence; that is, only defensively against the aggressive violence of another.¹

In short, no violence may be employed against a non-aggressor. Here is the fundamental rule from which can be deduced the entire *corpus* of libertarian theory.²

¹ There are some libertarians who would go even further and say that no one should employ violence even in defending himself against violence. However, even such Tolstoyans, or "absolute pacifists," would concede the defender's right to employ defensive violence and would merely urge him not to exercise that right. They, therefore, do not disagree with our proposition. In the same way, a libertarian temperance advocate would not challenge a man's right to drink liquor, only his wisdom in exercising that right.

² We shall not attempt to justify this axiom here. Most libertarians and even conservatives are familiar with the rule and even defend it; the problem is not so much in arriving at the rule as in fearlessly and consistently pursuing its numerous and often astounding implications.

Let us set aside the more complex problem of the State for awhile and consider simply relations between "private" individuals. Jones finds that he or his property is being invaded, aggressed against, by Smith. It is legitimate for Jones, as we have seen, to repel this invasion by defensive violence of his own. But now we come to a more knotty question: is it within the right of Jones to commit violence against innocent third parties as a corollary to his legitimate defense against Smith? To the libertarian, the answer must be clearly, no. Remember that the rule prohibiting violence against the persons or property of innocent men is absolute: it holds regardless of the subjective *motives* for the aggression. It is wrong and criminal to violate the property or person of another, even if one is a Robin Hood, or starving, or is doing it to save one's relatives, *or* is defending oneself against a third man's attack. We may understand and sympathize with the motives in many of these cases and extreme situations. We may later mitigate the guilt if the criminal comes to trial for punishment, but we cannot evade the judgment that this aggression is still a criminal act, and one which the victim has every right to repel, by violence if necessary. In short, A aggresses against B because C is threatening, or aggressing against, A. We may understand C's "higher" culpability in this whole procedure; but we must still label this aggression as a criminal act which B has the right to repel by violence.

To be more concrete, if Jones finds that his property is being stolen by Smith, he has the right to repel him and try to catch him; but he has *no* right to repel him by bombing a building and murdering innocent people or to catch him by spraying machine gun fire into an innocent crowd. If he does this, he is as much (or more of) a criminal aggressor as Smith is.

The application to problems of war and peace is already becoming evident. For while war in the narrower sense is a conflict between States, in the broader sense we may define it as the outbreak of open violence between people or groups of people. If Smith and a group of his henchmen aggress against Jones and Jones and his bodyguards pursue the Smith gang to their lair, we may cheer Jones on in his endeavor; and we, and others in society interested in repelling aggression, may contribute financially or personally to Jones's cause. But Jones has *no* right, any more than does Smith, to aggress against anyone else in the course of his "just war": to steal others' property in order to finance his pursuit, to conscript others into his posse by use of violence, or to kill others in the course of his struggle to capture the Smith forces. If Jones should do any of these things, he becomes a criminal as *fully* as Smith, and he too becomes subject to whatever sanctions are meted out against criminality. In fact, if Smith's crime was theft, and Jones should use conscription to catch him, or should kill others in the pursuit, Jones becomes more of a criminal than Smith, for such crimes against another person as enslavement and murder are surely far worse than theft. (For while theft injures the extension of another's personality, enslavement injures, and murder obliterates, that personality itself.)

Suppose that Jones, in the course of his "just war" against the ravages of Smith, should kill a few innocent people, and suppose that he should declaim, in defense of this murder, that he was simply acting on the slogan, "Give me liberty or give me death." The absurdity of this "defense" should be evident at once, for the issue is not whether Jones

was willing to risk death personally in his defensive struggle against Smith; the issue is whether he was willing to kill other people in pursuit of his legitimate end. For Jones was in truth acting on the completely indefensible slogan: "Give me liberty or give *them* death" surely a far less noble battle cry.³

The libertarian's basic attitude toward war must then be: it is legitimate to use violence against criminals in defense of one's rights of person and property; it is completely impermissible to violate the rights of *other* innocent people. War, then, is only proper when the exercise of violence is rigorously limited to the individual criminals. We may judge for ourselves how many wars or conflicts in history have met this criterion. It has often been maintained, and especially by conservatives, that the development of the horrendous modern weapons of mass murder (nuclear weapons, rockets, germ warfare, etc.) is only a difference of *degree* rather than *kind* from the simpler weapons of an earlier era. Of course, one answer to this is that when the degree is the number of human lives, the difference is a very big one.⁴ But another answer that the libertarian is particularly equipped to give is that while the bow and arrow and even the rifle can be pinpointed, if the will be there, against actual criminals, modern nuclear weapons cannot. Here is a crucial difference in kind. Of course, the bow and arrow could be used for aggressive purposes, but it could also be pinpointed to use only against aggressors. Nuclear weapons, even "conventional" aerial bombs, cannot be. These weapons are *ipso facto* engines of indiscriminate mass destruction. (The only exception would be the extremely rare case where a mass of people who were all criminals inhabited a vast geographical area.) We must, therefore, conclude that the use of nuclear or similar weapons, or the threat thereof, is a sin and a crime against humanity for which there can be no justification.

This is why the old cliché no longer holds that it is not the arms but the will to use them that is significant in judging matters of war and peace. For it is precisely the characteristic of modern weapons that they cannot be used selectively, cannot be used in a libertarian manner. Therefore, their very existence must be condemned, and nuclear disarmament becomes a good to be pursued for its own sake. And if we will indeed use our strategic intelligence, we will see that such disarmament is not only a good, but the highest political good that we can pursue in the modern world. For just as murder is a more heinous crime against another man than larceny, so mass murder – indeed murder so widespread as to threaten human civilization and human survival itself – is the worst crime that any man could possibly commit. And that crime is now imminent. And the forestalling of massive annihilation is far more important, in truth, than the demunicipalization of garbage disposal, as worthwhile as that may be. Or are libertarians

³ Or, to bring up another famous antipacifist slogan, the question is not whether "we would be willing to use force to prevent the rape of our sister," but whether, to prevent that rape, we are willing to kill innocent people and perhaps even the sister herself.

⁴ William Buckley and other conservatives have propounded the curious moral doctrine that it is no worse to kill millions than it is to kill one man. The man who does either is, to be sure, a murderer; but surely it makes a huge difference how many people he kills. We may see this by phrasing the problem thus: after a man has already killed one person, does it *make any difference* whether he stops killing now or goes on a further rampage and kills many dozen more people? Obviously, it does.

going to wax properly indignant about price control or the income tax, and yet shrug their shoulders at or even positively advocate the ultimate crime of mass murder?

If nuclear warfare is totally illegitimate even for individuals defending themselves against criminal assault, how much more so is nuclear or even "conventional" warfare between States!

It is time now to bring the State into our discussion. The State is a group of people who have managed to acquire a virtual monopoly of the use of violence throughout a given territorial area. In particular, it has acquired a monopoly of aggressive violence, for States generally recognize the right of individuals to use violence (though not against States, of course) in self-defense.⁵ The State then uses this monopoly to wield power over the inhabitants of the area and to enjoy the material fruits of that power. The State, then, is the only organization in society that regularly and openly obtains its monetary revenues by the use of *aggressive* violence; all other individuals and organizations (except if delegated that right by the State) can obtain wealth only by peaceful production and by voluntary exchange of their respective products. This use of violence to obtain its revenue (called "taxation") is the keystone of State power. Upon this base the State erects a further structure of power over the individuals in its territory, regulating them, penalizing critics, subsidizing favorites, etc. The State also takes care to arrogate to itself the compulsory monopoly of various critical services needed by society, thus keeping the people in dependence upon the State for key services, keeping control of the vital command posts in society and also fostering among the public the myth that *only* the State can supply these goods and services. Thus the State is careful to monopolize police and judicial service, the ownership of roads and streets, the supply of money, and the postal service, and effectively to monopolize or control education, public utilities, transportation, and radio and television.

Now, since the State arrogates to itself the monopoly of violence over a territorial area, so long as its depredations and extortions go unresisted, there is said to be "peace" in the area, since the only violence is one-way, directed by the State downward against the people. Open conflict within the area only breaks out in the case of "revolutions" in which people resist the use of State power against them. Both the quiet case of the State unresisted and the case of open revolution may be termed "vertical violence": violence of the State against its public or vice versa.

In the modern world, each land area is ruled over by a State organization, but there are a number of States scattered over the earth, each with a monopoly of violence over its own territory. No super-State exists with a monopoly of violence over the entire world; and so a state of "anarchy" exists between the several States. (It has always been a source of wonder, incidentally, to this writer how the same conservatives who denounce as lunatic any proposal for eliminating a monopoly of violence over a given territory and thus

⁵ Professor Robert L. Cunningham has defined the State as the institution with "a monopoly on initiating open physical coercion." Or, as Albert Jay Nock put it similarly if more caustically, "The State claims and exercises the monopoly of crime.... It forbids private murder, but itself organizes murder on a colossal scale. It punishes private theft, but itself lays unscrupulous hands on anything it wants."

leaving private individuals without an overlord, should be equally insistent upon leaving *States* without an overlord to settle disputes between them. The former is always denounced as "crackpot anarchism"; the latter is hailed as preserving independence and "national sovereignty" from "world government.") And so, except for revolutions, which occur only sporadically, the open violence and two-sided conflict in the world takes place *between* two or more States, that is, in what is called "international war" (or "horizontal violence").

Now there are crucial and vital differences between inter-State warfare on the one hand and revolutions against the State or conflicts between private individuals on the other. One vital difference is the shift in geography. In a revolution, the conflict takes place *within* the same geographical area: both the minions of the State and the revolutionaries inhabit the same territory. Inter-State warfare, on the other hand, takes place between two groups, each having a monopoly over its own geographical area; that is, it takes place between inhabitants of different territories. From this difference flow several important consequences: (1) in inter-State war the scope for the use of modern weapons of destruction is far greater. For if the "escalation" of weaponry in an intra-territorial conflict becomes too great, each side will blow itself up with the weapons directed against the other. Neither a revolutionary group nor a State combating revolution, for example, can use nuclear weapons against the other. But, on the other hand, when the warring parties inhabit different territorial areas, the scope for modern weaponry becomes enormous, and the entire arsenal of mass devastation can come into play. A second consequence (2) is that while it is *possible* for revolutionaries to pinpoint their targets and confine them to their State enemies, and thus avoid aggressing against innocent people, pinpointing is far less possible in an inter-State war.⁶ This is true even with older weapons; and, of course, with modern weapons there can be no pinpointing whatever. Furthermore, (3) since each State can mobilize all the people and resources in its territory, the other State comes to regard all the citizens of the opposing country as at least temporarily its enemies and to treat them accordingly by extending the war to them. Thus, all of the consequences of inter-territorial war make it almost inevitable that inter-State war will involve aggression by each side against the innocent civilians – the private individuals – of the other. This inevitability becomes absolute with modern weapons of mass destruction.

If one distinct attribute of inter-State war is inter-territoriality, another unique attribute stems from the fact that each State lives by taxation over its subjects. Any war against another State, therefore, involves the increase and extension of taxation-aggression over its own people.⁷ Conflicts between private individuals can be, and usually are, voluntarily waged and financed by the parties concerned. Revolutions can be, and often

⁶ An outstanding example of pinpointing by revolutionaries was the invariable practice of the Irish Republican Army, in its later years, of making sure that only British troops and British government property were attacked and that no innocent Irish civilians were injured. A guerrilla revolution not supported by the bulk of the people, of course, is far more likely to aggress against civilians.

⁷ If it be objected that a war *could* theoretically be financed solely by a State's lowering of nonwar expenditures, then the reply still holds that taxation remains greater than it *could* be without the war effect. Moreover, the purport of this article is that libertarians should be opposed to government expenditures *whatever* the field, war or nonwar.

are, financed and fought by voluntary contributions of the public. But State wars can only be waged through aggression against the taxpayer.

All State wars, therefore, involve increased aggression against the State's own taxpayers, and almost all State wars (*all*, in modern warfare) involve the maximum aggression (murder) against the innocent civilians ruled by the enemy State. On the other hand, revolutions are generally financed voluntarily and may pinpoint their violence to the State rulers, and private conflicts may confine their violence to the actual criminals. The libertarian must, therefore, conclude that, while some revolutions and some private conflicts *may* be legitimate, State wars are *always* to be condemned.

Many libertarians object as follows: "While we too deplore the use of taxation for warfare, and the State's monopoly of defense service, we have to recognize that these conditions exist, and while they do, we must support the State in just wars of defense." The reply to this would go as follows: "Yes, as you say, unfortunately States exist, each having a monopoly of violence over its territorial area." What then should be the attitude of the libertarian toward conflicts between these States? The libertarian should say, in effect, to the State: "All right, you exist, but as long as you exist at least confine your activities to the area which you monopolize." In short, the libertarian is interested in reducing as much as possible the area of State aggression against all private individuals. The only way to do this, in international affairs, is for the people of each country to pressure their own State to confine its activities to the area which it monopolizes and not to aggress against other State-monopolists. In short, the objective of the libertarian is to confine any existing State to as small a degree of invasion of person and property as possible. And this means the total avoidance of war. The people under each State should pressure "their" respective States not to attack one another, and, if a conflict should break out, to negotiate a peace or declare a cease-fire as quickly as physically possible. Suppose further that we have that rarity – an unusually clear-cut case in which the State is actually trying to defend the property of one of its citizens. A citizen of country A travels or invests in country B, and then State B aggresses against his person or confiscates his property. Surely, our libertarian critic would argue, here is a clear-cut case where State A should threaten or commit war against State B in order to defend the property of "its" citizen. Since, the argument runs, the State has taken upon itself the monopoly of defense of its citizens, it then has the obligation to go to war on behalf of any citizen, and libertarians have an obligation to support this war as a just one.

But the point again is that each State has a monopoly of violence and, therefore, of defense only over its territorial area. It has no such monopoly; in fact, it has no power at all, over any other geographical area. Therefore, if an inhabitant of country A should move to or invest in country B, the libertarian must argue that he thereby takes his chances with the State-monopolist of country B, and it would be immoral and criminal for State A to tax people in country A *and* kill numerous innocents in country B in order to defend the property of the traveler or investor.⁸

⁸ There is another consideration which applies rather to "domestic" defense within a State's territory: the less the State can successfully defend the inhabitants of its area against attack by criminals, the *more* these

It should also be pointed out that there is no defense against nuclear weapons (the only current "defense" is the threat of mutual annihilation) and, therefore, that the State *cannot* fulfill any sort of defense function so long as these weapons exist.

The libertarian objective, then, should be, regardless of the specific causes of any conflict, to pressure States not to launch wars against other States and, should a war break out, to pressure them to sue for peace and negotiate a cease-fire and peace treaty as quickly as physically possible. This objective, incidentally, is enshrined in the international law of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that is, the ideal that no State could aggress against the territory of another – in short, the "peaceful coexistence" of States.⁹

Suppose, however, that despite libertarian opposition, war has begun and the warring States are not negotiating a peace. What, then, should be the libertarian position? Clearly, to reduce the scope of assault of innocent civilians as much as possible. Old-fashioned international law had two excellent devices for this: the "laws of war," and the "laws of neutrality" or "neutrals' rights." The laws of neutrality are designed to keep any war that breaks out confined to the warring States themselves, without aggression against the States or particularly the peoples of the other nations. Hence the importance of such ancient and now forgotten American principles as "freedom of the seas" or severe limitations upon the rights of warring States to blockade neutral trade with the enemy country. In short, the libertarian tries to induce neutral States to *remain* neutral in any inter-State conflict and to induce the warring States to observe fully the rights of neutral citizens. The "laws of war" were designed to limit as much as possible the invasion by warring States of the rights of the civilians of the respective warring countries. As the British jurist F.J.P. Veale put it:

The fundamental principle of this code was that hostilities between civilized peoples must be limited to the armed forces actually engaged.... It drew a distinction between combatants and noncombatants by laying down that the sole business of the combatants is to fight each other and, consequently, that noncombatants must be excluded from the scope of military operations.¹⁰

In the modified form of prohibiting the bombardment of all cities not in the front line, this rule held in Western European wars in recent centuries until Britain launched the strategic bombing of civilians in World War II. Now, of course, the entire concept is scarcely remembered, the very nature of nuclear war resting on the annihilation of civilians.

inhabitants may come to learn the inefficiency of state operations, and the more they will turn to non-State methods of defense. Failure by the State to defend, therefore, has educative value for the public.

⁹ The international law mentioned in this paper is the old-fashioned libertarian law as had voluntarily emerged in previous centuries and has nothing to do with the modern statist accretion of "collective security." Collective security forces a maximum escalation of every local war into a worldwide war – the precise reversal of the libertarian objective of *reducing* the scope of any war as much as possible.

¹⁰ F.J.P. Veale, [*Advance to Barbarism*](#) (Appleton, Wis.: C.C. Nelson, 1953), p. 58.

In condemning all wars, regardless of motive, the libertarian knows that there may well be varying degrees of guilt among States for any specific war. But the overriding consideration for the libertarian is the condemnation of any State participation in war. Hence his policy is that of exerting pressure on all States not to start a war, to stop one that has begun and to reduce the scope of any persisting war in injuring civilians of either side or no side.

A neglected corollary to the libertarian policy of peaceful coexistence of States is the rigorous abstention from any foreign aid; that is, a policy of nonintervention between States (= "isolationism" = "neutralism"). For any aid given by State A to State B (1) increases tax aggression against the people of country A and (2) aggravates the suppression by State B of its own people. If there are any revolutionary groups in country B, then foreign aid intensifies this suppression all the more. Even foreign aid to a revolutionary group in B – more defensible because directed to a voluntary group opposing a State rather than a State oppressing the people – must be condemned as (at the very least) aggravating tax aggression at home.

Let us see how libertarian theory applies to the problem of *imperialism*, which may be defined as the aggression by State A over the people of country B, and the subsequent maintenance of this foreign rule. Revolution by the B people against the imperial rule of A is certainly legitimate, provided again that revolutionary fire be directed only against the rulers. It has often been maintained – even by libertarians – that Western imperialism over undeveloped countries should be supported as more watchful of property rights than any successor native government would be. The first reply is that judging what might follow the *status quo* is purely speculative, whereas existing imperialist rule is all too real and culpable. Moreover, the libertarian here begins his focus at the wrong end – at the alleged benefit of imperialism to the native. He should, on the contrary, concentrate first on the Western taxpayer, who is mulcted and burdened to pay for the wars of conquest, and then for the maintenance of the imperial bureaucracy. On this ground alone, the libertarian must condemn imperialism.¹¹

Does opposition to all war mean that the libertarian can never countenance change – that he is consigning the world to a permanent freezing of unjust regimes? Certainly not. Suppose, for example, that the hypothetical state of "Waldavia" has attacked "Ruritania" and annexed the western part of the country. The Western Ruritarians now long to be reunited with their Ruritanian brethren. How is this to be achieved? There is, of course,

¹¹ Two other points about Western imperialism: first, its rule is not nearly so liberal or benevolent as many libertarians like to believe. The only property rights respected are those of the Europeans; the *natives* find their best lands stolen from them by the imperialists and their labor coerced by violence into working the vast landed estates acquired by this theft.

Second, another myth holds that the "gunboat diplomacy" of the turn of the century was a heroic libertarian action in defense of the property rights of Western investors in backward countries. Aside from our above strictures against going beyond any State's monopolized land area, it is overlooked that the bulk of gunboat moves were in defense, *not* of private investments, but of Western holders of government bonds. The Western powers coerced the smaller governments into increasing tax aggression on their own people, in order to pay off foreign bondholders. By no stretch of the imagination was this an action on behalf of private property – quite the contrary.

the route of peaceful negotiation between the two powers, but suppose that the Waldavian imperialists prove adamant. Or, libertarian Waldavians can put pressure on their government to abandon its conquest in the name of justice. But suppose that this, too, does not work. What then? We must still maintain the illegitimacy of Ruritania's mounting a war against Waldavia. The legitimate routes are (1) revolutionary uprisings by the oppressed Western Ruritanian people, and (2) aid by private Ruritanian groups (or, for that matter, by friends of the Ruritanian cause in other countries) to the Western rebels – either in the form of equipment or of volunteer personnel.¹²

We have seen throughout our discussion the crucial importance, in any present-day libertarian peace program, of the elimination of modern methods of mass annihilation. These weapons, against which there can be no defense, assure maximum aggression against civilians in any conflict with the clear prospect of the destruction of civilization and even of the human race itself. Highest priority on any libertarian agenda, therefore, must be pressure on all States to agree to general and complete disarmament down to police levels, with particular stress on nuclear disarmament. In short, if we are to use our strategic intelligence, we must conclude that the dismantling of the greatest menace that has ever confronted the life and liberty of the human race is indeed far more important than demunicipalizing the garbage service.

We cannot leave our topic without saying at least a word about the domestic tyranny that is the inevitable accompaniment of war. The great Randolph Bourne realized that "war is the health of the State."¹³ It is in war that the State really comes into its own: swelling in power, in number, in pride, in absolute dominion over the economy and the society. Society becomes a herd, seeking to kill its alleged enemies, rooting out and suppressing all dissent from the official war effort, happily betraying truth for the supposed public interest. Society becomes an armed camp, with the values and the morale – as Albert Jay Nock once phrased it – of an "army on the march."

The root myth that enables the State to wax fat off war is the canard that war is a defense *by* the State *of* its subjects. The facts, of course, are precisely the reverse. For if war is the health of the State, it is also its greatest danger. A State can only "die" by defeat in war or by revolution. In war, therefore, the State frantically mobilizes the people to fight for *it* against another State, under the pretext that *it* is fighting for them. But all this should occasion no surprise; we see it in other walks of life. For which categories of crime does the State pursue and punish most intensely – those against private citizens or those against *itself*? The gravest crimes in the State's lexicon are almost invariably not invasions of person and property, but dangers to its *own* contentment: for example, treason, desertion of a soldier to the enemy, failure to register for the draft, conspiracy to overthrow the government. Murder is pursued haphazardly unless the victim be a

¹² The Tolstoyan wing of the libertarian movement could urge the Western Ruritanians to engage in *nonviolent* revolution, for example, tax strikes, boycotts, mass refusal to obey government orders or a general strike – especially in arms factories. Cf. the work of the revolutionary Tolstoyan, Bartelemy De Lig, *The Conquest of Violence: An Essay On War and Revolution* (New York: Dutton, 1938).

¹³ See Randolph Bourne, "Unfinished Fragment on the State," in *Untimely Papers* (New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1919).

policeman, or *Gott soll hüten*, an assassinated Chief of State; failure to pay a private debt is, if anything, almost encouraged, but income tax evasion is punished with utmost severity; counterfeiting the State's money is pursued far more relentlessly than forging private checks, etc. All this evidence demonstrates that the State is far more interested in preserving its own power than in defending the rights of private citizens.

A final word about conscription: of all the ways in which war aggrandizes the State, this is perhaps the most flagrant and most despotic. But the most striking fact about conscription is the absurdity of the arguments put forward on its behalf. A man must be conscripted to defend his (or someone else's?) liberty against an evil State beyond the borders. Defend his liberty? How? By being coerced into an army whose very *raison d'être* is the expunging of liberty, the trampling on all the liberties of the person, the calculated and brutal dehumanization of the soldier and his transformation into an efficient engine of murder at the whim of his "commanding officer"?¹⁴ Can any conceivable foreign State do anything worse to him than what "his" army is now doing for his alleged benefit? Who is there, O Lord, to defend him against his "defenders"?

¹⁴ To the old militarist taunt hurled against the pacifist: "Would you use force to prevent the rape of your sister?" the proper retort is: "Would you rape your sister if ordered to do so by your commanding officer?"