

1983

The Politics of War and Peace

Paul R. Schratz

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Schratz, Paul R. (1983) "The Politics of War and Peace," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 36 : No. 1 , Article 18.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol36/iss1/18>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

Cadoux argues that the nonviolence and nonresistance teaching of Jesus entails though it does not explicitly state that war is morally evil and that no true Christian should have anything to do with it. The Augustinian-Lutheran tradition later replied in effect, "Of course! If the world consisted of true Christians, good people! But it does not. Therefore in certain circumstances the State has the right to secure its *bene esse* by force, including military force, and to exact military service of its members." The Thomist position, though more circumspect, is not dissimilar.

No one can dispute Cadoux's perception that a crucial shift in Christian teaching on war occurred after Constantine made Christianity his religion. He draws from this fact the conclusion that Christianity thereby lost an important part of its original doctrine of peace. But the premise of this argument cuts two ways. Early Christians set themselves apart; they held no political power and thus felt little responsibility for the welfare and security of the State, an earthly entity they believed would soon disappear. Paul was shrewd enough to see the danger in this and admonished the Christian communities concerning their duties to civil authority. But once Christians came into political power, they inherited the responsibility of securing the welfare of the State which at times required the use of force, including military force. That this force was all too often sadly misused in centuries to come no one would deny. But that the proper use of this force is inherently iniquitous, therefore interdicted to professing Christians, is harder to prove.

They are on firmer ground today who maintain that the ethical question lies not so much in the fact of war *per se*, but in the purposes for which it is waged and

the means used to achieve those ends—means which even the dullest of just war theorists remind us must not be disproportionate to whatever good may be intended.

J.G. BRENNAN
Naval War College

Brayton, Ahcott A. and Landwehr, Stephana J. *The Politics of War and Peace: A Survey of Thought*. Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1981. 294pp. \$20.50 paper \$11.50

At a time when the nation is critically examining its defense policies and organization, a review of the politics of war and peace can be most helpful. Authors Brayton and Landwehr selected carefully from 3,500 years of writing on peace, war, politics, and ethics, seeking important changes in the conduct of war. Each writer is allowed to speak for himself in order that readers have access to original sources in making their own judgments. A brief introduction and assessment of each writer's historical significance precedes the selection.

To frame the problem, General Andrew Goodpaster asks in the foreword, "What, for example, are the desires and needs—within and among men, within and among nations—that give rise to war? What is the essential nature of war? Of peace? Under what conditions and within what limits can war be justified? How do the men and institutions engaged in war, or held ready for war, relate to the society and the nation to which they belong? What goals and *whose* goals can war serve? What goals *should* it serve? How far could these goals be better served by peace, and in what ways could this be accomplished? What shared values on a worldwide scale . . . fall under the shadow of the threat of war, and how can that threat be contained, while the

values themselves are preserved and protected?"

Modern society, the beneficiary of many intellectual and technological gifts, seems no more capable than the ancients of achieving a just peace. Plato and the other early philosophers logically presumed most war to be evil. They developed criteria to illustrate the differences between the just and the unjust war in the belief that war should serve as a political instrument only when justice demanded it.

Medieval philosophers tried to distinguish between the civilian and the soldier and to place limitations on war within two emerging schools of thought.

The first school contrasted the contractual and the organic views of the state. The contractual notion, conducive to democratic values, expected all citizens to perform a wartime role; in the organic state all citizens must serve as their inherent duty, especially during war. Both groups helped shape the notion of a mass national army which in time supplanted the small professional or mercenary armies.

The second school of thought examined the growth of technology in the medieval era and the vastly increased firepower and lethality of war. Both schools shaped the modern era of massive force, total war, and the risk of extermination.

The modern era added other views at both extremes of war and peace, some extremist with sweeping concepts and goals, others reducing the issues to shallow slogans, both unreasonable and unworkable and, in the authors' view, sometimes contributing to the outbreak of war.

Peace through the ages was and has been preserved by constant striving for and maintenance of a balance of power between sovereignties. Yet military

professionals often forget the importance of striving for peace to preserve the balance; some are mere technicians who resist intellectual inquiry and ignore the vital lessons of history. Some academic counterparts see war as the ultimate injustice, whatever the result. Understanding the causes of war requires time, study, experience, common sense, and a knowledge of the past which created the present. Such is the path to wisdom and compassion so vital for mankind's advance beyond barbarism and toward a better civilization.

The survey of thought from ancient to modern times is quite well done. The selections are short, pithy, well integrated, and offer excellent source material for further study. Several noted philosophers are included whose works are not often considered in relation to the politics of war and peace. Their inclusion, however, magnifies the major flaw, the absence of prominent military strategists and philosophers, particularly of the current era. *The Politics of War and Peace* should include thoughts of war as well as peace. The Clausewitz selection is from a poor translation and not well chosen. But where is Mahan or Mackinder, Beaufre or Brodie, Howard or Liddell Hart, Millis or Kissinger, or (to include our home-grown scholars) Eccles and Wylie? If the quote of General Goodpaster above suggests anything, surely these thinkers have much to offer and their absence is strange indeed.

PAUL R. SCHRATZ
Annapolis, Maryland

Alger, John I. *The Quest for Victory; the History of the Principles of War*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982. 318pp. \$29.95

The very nature of war is at stake in the subtitle of this book. Common sense