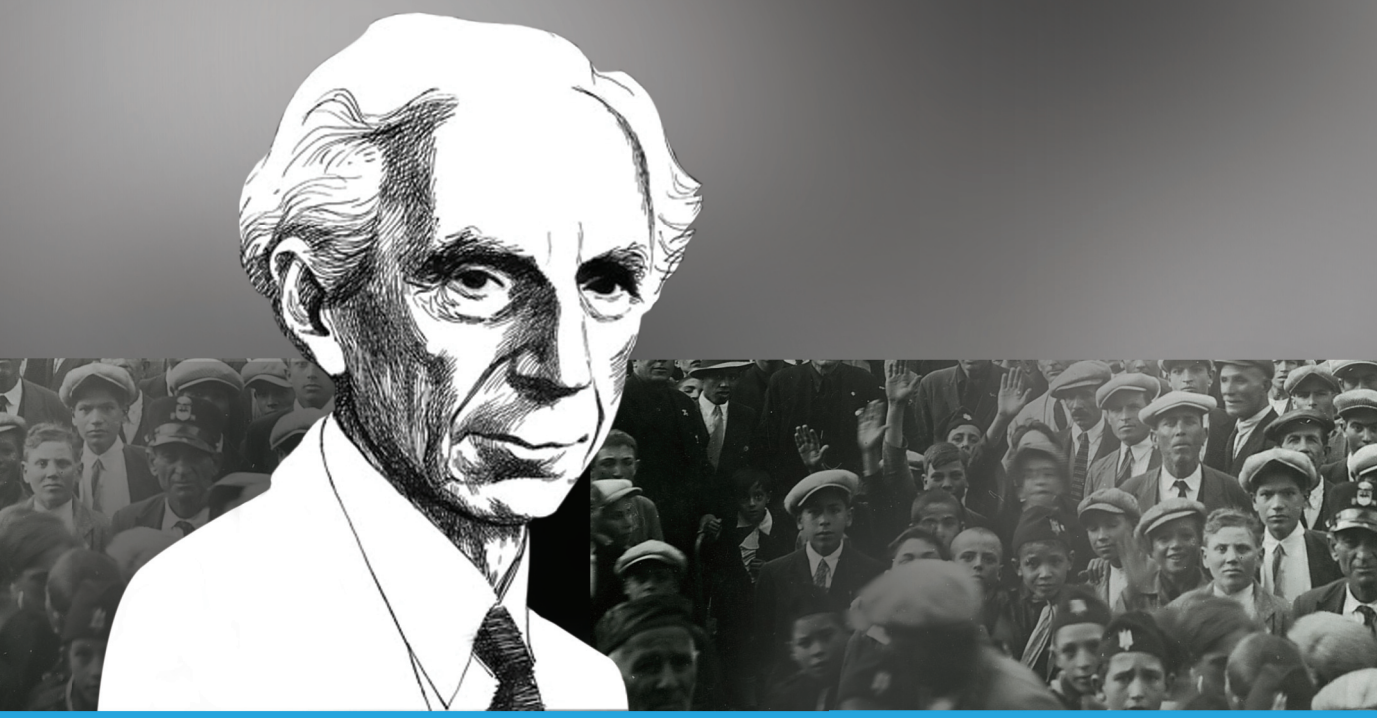
Consistency and Change in Bertrand Russell's Attitude towards War

Laura Slot



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Sidestone Press

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MASTER THESIS, AUGUST 2007
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, SCHOOL OF ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES
UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

SUPERVISOR: DR. JOES SEGAL

PUBLISHED BY SIDESTONE PRESS
www.sidestone.nl
SIDESTONE REGISTRATION NUMBER: HKW25310002

ISBN 978-90-8890-003-7

COVER DESIGN: JORIS SPIERTZ

NO NATION WAS EVER SO VIRTUOUS AS EACH BELIEVES ITSELF,
AND NONE WAS EVER SO WICKED AS EACH BELIEVES THE OTHER.

-BERTRAND RUSSELL, JUSTICE IN WARTIME (1916)

Bertrand Russell with the Pears Trophy, awarded for his work on behalf of world peace in 1955. It says 'Bertrand Russell illuminating a path to peace 1955'. BBC Hulton Picture Library.

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PREFACE

This study has been an enriching journey through the darkness of the twentieth century on the back of an invincible rationalist from the nineteenth century. In several books I read during my education Bertrand Russell's name appeared, and to me he was one of the few intellectuals who rebelled against the First World War. I have found myself particularly interested in unconventional political outsiders, and Russell seemed to personify exactly that. Reminiscing my severe difficulties with mathematics in secondary school, it feels somewhat ironic to have devoted my thesis to a famous mathematician. Although he often approached his political subjects mathematically, it proved possible to assess his attitude towards war without having to understand his undoubtedly brilliant formulas and paradoxes. Many comments on Russell by historians had to do with either the consistency or change in his political attitude. In this thesis I attempt to grasp the more fundamental motivations for his theories, mentality and action during each of the three major wars of the twentieth century. I thank Thomas Pepitone for enabling me to share my enthusiasm about this old philosopher. Also thanks to my professors Joes Segal, Jeroen Koch, Thijs Pollmann and others for inspiring me and making my time at Utrecht University unforgettable.

Laura Slot
Utrecht, 10 August 2007

INTRODUCTION

In the course of his long life, Bertrand Arthur William Russell (1872-1970) established himself not only as a brilliant mathematician but also as a diverse philosopher, professor, writer and political activist. On various subjects he wrote well over two thousand articles and published some sixty books during his lifetime. Russell is widely known as an intellectual passionately dedicated to the well-being of mankind; fervently advocating international freedom, peace and stability. After the First World War ended the stability Europe had experienced in the nineteenth century, he proved himself to be one of the most distinct analysts of international affairs, and he would remain so for the rest of his life.

Russell came from a liberal aristocratic family. His grandfather, 1st Earl John Russell, was prime minister under Queen Victoria from 1846-1852 and from 1865-1866. Bertrand's mother died of diphtheria when he was only two years old and his father, lacking any will left to live, died of bronchitis shortly after in 1876. The young Bertie, godson of both philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and one of the earliest suffragettes Helen Taylor (1831-1907), was now raised by his grandmother at their residence called Pembroke Lodge[1] in Richmond Park. During his childhood, he was surrounded by an atmosphere of far-off nineteenth century times: his grandfather had visited Napoleon on Elba and his grandmother occasionally called her grandson the names of dead people by mistake. This environment had, in the words of his biographer, 'poured him into the straitjacket of a life which toughened him physically and intellectually, starved him emotionally and, more than any other factor, made him the man

[1] This imposing mansion was given to Russell's grandfather by Queen Victoria in 1847.

he was to become.'[2] Later, in his autobiography, Russell wrote that his grandmother's influence on his personality had been considerable:

> 'her fearlessness, her public spirit, her contempt for convention, and her indifference to the opinion of the majority have always seemed good to me and have impressed themselves upon me as worthy of imitation. She gave me a bible with her favorite texts written on the fly-leaf. Among these was 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil'. Her emphasis upon this text led me in later life to be not afraid of belonging to small minorities.'[3]

It was a virtue he would heavily rely upon when carrying out his political convictions.

Russell devoted himself to mathematics at a young age. His university time at Cambridge was a relief from his starchy upbringing and formed a new beginning in which he discovered that the study of mathematics was much more appealing than his initial intention of entering politics. From 1894 until 1911, he was married to Alys Pearsall Smith (1867-1951), a wealthy American Quaker. During the second half of their marriage they both had become increasingly miserable and unhappy, driving Russell into mathematics more vigorously until the war broke out. Russell wrote that before 1914, 'the world seemed hopeful and solid; we all felt convinced that nineteenth-century progress would continue, and that we ourselves should be able to continue something of value. For those who have been young since 1914 it must be difficult to imagine the happiness of those days.'[4] In 2004, American writer William Pfaff similarly argued in his book *The Bullet's Song* that the outbreak of the First World War marked the beginning of political violence, nihilism, romantic ideology and utopia in the twentieth century. He argued that it was a

[2] Clark, Ronald. *Bertrand Russell and His World.* Thames & Hudson, London, 1981. pp. 12.
[3] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume I, 1872-1914.* pp. 22.
[4] Russell, Bertrand. "My Mental Development" in: *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell 1903-1959*. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1961.

> 'great shift that took place in the West's moral and historical assumptions before and during the 1914-1918 war, and that produced twentieth-century crisis, its totalitarian regimes and wars, and the armed utopian movements in Italy, Germany, and Russia that in interaction with the responses to them of the liberal West dominated international affairs from the 1920s to the 1990s and the end of the cold war.'

According to Pfaff, the world had lost the ancient moral values of 'chivalry'.[5] Russell also claimed that around 1914, a new era began which ruined much of what was valued in the nineteenth century. In 1937, in his satirical obituary, Russell portrayed himself as 'the last survivor of a dead epoch.'[6] A plausible description, because what he attempted mostly was to preserve the traditions and values of the nineteenth century. His answer to the modern age was to cling to his own utopian image of a peaceful and civilized world, a vision depicting the world during his Victorian childhood. Russell was forced to adapt to the modern age but he never refrained from rebelling against the evils modernity had brought along. The only option to remain standing amidst a radical and violent crowd was to be an equally radical prophet of peace. Pfaff points out T.E. Lawrence (1888-1935) as 'the last hero' of that bygone era, but it could very well have been Russell.

It is understandable that Russell's attitude towards war appears confusing. He was both a realist and an idealist; he was neither a strict liberal nor a dogmatic socialist, and his pragmatic stance often caused him to evaluate issues differently in changing situations. For example, Russell wrote in a letter in 1915: 'This morning I read a paper to a Pacifist Conference. They were an awful crew. Pacifists are really no good.'[7] But at his arrival in America in 1938 he pointed out to

[5] Pfaff, William. *The Bullet's Song. Romantic Violence and Utopia*. Simon & Schuster, New York, 2004. pp. 3.
[6] Russell, Bertrand. "Obituary" in: *Unpopular Essays.* George Allen & Unwin, London, 1950. pp. 223.
[7] Russell to Ottoline Morrell, 8 July 1915. Cited in: *Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell.* Volume 13: *Prophecy and Dissent 1914-16*. Rempel, Richard (ed.) e.a. Unwin Hyman, London, 1988. pp. 145.

journalists how he was an 'extreme pacifist'.[8] Robert Egner and Lester Denonn, editors of *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*, explain how Russell was never ashamed of adjusting his views, simply because times and circumstances changed quickly during his long life and logically, it would have been impossible for anyone to maintain the same opinions in 1900 as in 1970.[9] Russell himself was also very clear about this: 'To achieve a single purpose, sane men adapt their policies to the circumstances. Those who do not are insane.'[10] His natural interest in world affairs, however, remained consistent during his life: his first book, *German Social Democracy* (1896) was about international politics, and so were his last books. He was one of the few philosophers able to foresee and asses the international circumstances despite unpredictable human behavior amidst turbulent environments. As a pilgrim of peace he made it his task to influence mankind and to 'prevent the impulse towards war which seizes whole communities from time to time.'[11]

Russell left the world with an important legacy. Almost forty years after his death, Russell's political philosophy –both in theory and his attitude in practice- contributes much to solving vexing problems in contemporary international relations. In one of his articles called "How to Grow Old" Russell, age eighty-four, said: 'I should wish to die while still at work, knowing that others will carry on what I can no longer do, and content in the thought that what was possible has been done.'[12] Russell therefore tied his name to political organizations holding convictions similar to his. The most important example is The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, founded in 1963. It is still active today and it attempts to carry forth Russell's work on behalf of world peace.

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[8] Cited in: Moorehead, Caroline. *Bertrand Russell. A Life.* Viking Penguin, New York, 1992. pp. 428.
[9] Egner, Robert; Denonn, Lester. *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell 1903-1959*. pp. 9.
[10] Russell, Bertrand. *Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare.* George Allen & Unwin, London, 1959. pp. 91.
[11] Russell, Bertrand. *Principles of Social Reconstruction*. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1916. pp. 92-93. This work was published in the United States under the title *Why Men Fight: A Method of Abolishing the International Duel*.
[12] Russell, Bertrand. "How to Grow Old" in: *Portraits from Memory and Other Essays*. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1956. pp. 52.

It is the purpose of this thesis to analyze which elements in Russell's attitude towards war have been consistent; which have been subject to change; and for which reasons. Three periods will be discussed in comparative perspective: the First World War (1914-1930), the Second World War (1930-1945) and the Cold War (1945-1970). Russell's writings are categorized in these three periods. Every chapter elaborates on five themes, respectively Russell's ethics of war; his relation to the public; his political activities; his stance towards national and international politics; and his ideas on peace and the future. The first part, his ethics of war, focuses primarily on his approach and moral theories on war: what are they based upon and why? The second theme forms an analysis of his position in society, his perception of mankind, the masses and the elites, and the relation between his views and public opinion: were his views accepted? Was he optimistic or pessimistic about human nature? The third theme pays attention to Russell's political activities and assesses the degree of radicalism, cooperation and organization, his strategies and his mentality when carrying out his duties. The fourth theme describes his views on domestic and international politics and his stance with the political authorities in both Britain and abroad. What, for example, were his views on Russia and America? The fifth theme focuses on his ideas on peace and the future of international relations. All chapters encompass both Russell's theoretical *and* practical attitude, because Russell himself was convinced that pacifism was a mode of activity, not a theory.

The general emphasis lies on his public life in politics and less on his –also enervating- private life; although in some cases a strict distinction cannot be maintained. The same is true for his role as philosopher and mathematician. Although his professional and public life appear rather separated from each other, historian Philip Ironside rightly argues how Russell's academic performances provided him with the credibility he needed to spread his political messages. Analyses of other historians who have focused on Russell's political attitude, like Alan Wood, Ryan Alan or Jo Vellacott, will be assessed and compared where relevant. Most works on Russell encompass either his whole life (Wood; Alan), or one particular period or issue

(Vellacott; Ironside). A systematic analysis of his attitude towards war in comparative perspective, differentiating these three distinct periods, has hitherto not been made. In order to provide answers to questions on Russell's attitude towards war, the focus of this thesis lies on those aspects that have been often misinterpreted or debated: why did he object to the First World War and supported the Second World War? And did he really advocate a preventive war against the Soviet Union?

Bertrand Russell lived almost an entire century, a century full of change. He was one of the few who dared to provide answers to the impossible questions of twentieth century world politics. By comparing the three wars in a historical context the reader will discover why there was change or consistency.

I AT WAR WITH THE WAR: 1914-1930

Bertrand Russell, together with most others, did not expect the war that lay ahead until shortly before its outbreak. In a fully industrialized England with a world-wide established empire, few Englishmen anticipated that the rich and protected life of Victorian and Edwardian times would come to an end. An example of this lightheartedness is the well-known book *The Great Illusion* (1910) by writer and Labour politician Norman Angell (1872-1967). Herein it was argued how war in the modern age would be a worthless cause; the European nations had economically and otherwise become too interdependent for one country to benefit from dominating the other.[13] Russell subscribed to this view both before and after the outbreak of the war. Modern war was futile and therefore improbable. Whether this widespread optimism was justified or not, for Russell, the very idea of war was simply too unlikely, too vulgar and too obscene until the summer of 1914 arrived.

The First World War drastically changed Bertrand Russell's life. He transformed from a sober and introverted mathematician into an intellectual activist. He regained a purpose in life through the war, experiencing what he described as 'a unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind.' He wrote: 'the First World War gave a new direction to my interests. The war, and the problem of preventing future wars, absorbed me, and the books I wrote on this and cognate subjects caused me to become known to a wider public.'[14] And in his autobiography, he described: 'my life before 1910 and my life after 1914 were as sharply separated as Faust's life before and after he met

[13] Angell, Norman. *De Groote Illusie*. Sijthoff's, Leiden, 1910.
[14] Russell, Bertrand. "My Mental Development" in: *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*. pp. 47.

Mephistopheles.'[15] Although he had been politically active for liberal causes such as free trade and women's suffrage until 1910, his engagement with international affairs became more apparent and passionate after 1914. His embittered marriage with Alys Pearsall Smith came to an end after seventeen years in 1911. He described his personal life as unsatisfactory; his suicidal tendencies were kept under control only by his devotion to mathematics. Out of a growing pessimism that female suffrage was not soon to be achieved, he retreated from his activities and accepted a five-year position at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1910. Between 1909 and 1912, he was predominantly concerned with the writing of the famous three-volume work *Principa Mathematica* (1910-1913) together with the English mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947). Mathematics provided a way out of everyday life, something Russell was grateful for: 'I love mathematics, because it is *not* human and has nothing to do with the whole accidental universe – because, like Spinoza's God, it won't love us in return.'[16] After the last volume was published, he missed a specific purpose in life and somewhat reluctantly reconsidered a political career. Despite the reservations of his grandmother, who preferred a continuation of the family tradition in politics, he chose philosophy over politics. Russell mentioned that around 1914, he 'underwent a process of rejuvenation, inaugurated by Ottoline Morrell and continued by the war.'[17] In 1910 he had met Lady Ottoline Morrell (1873-1938), whom he never married but who would play an important role in Russell's private and public life until her death in 1938. Engagement in everyday life now started to provide a way out of the quaint life of academia, instead of the other way around. With the sudden outbreak of the war, the personal void he had been experiencing was almost instantly filled. Simultaneously, Russell would severely compromise his career and personal life through

[15] Russell here refers to *Faust,* the work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume II, 1914-1944.* George Allen & Unwin, London, 1968. pp. 15.
[16] Quoted in: Clark, Ronald. *Bertrand Russell and His World.* pp. 16.
[17] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume II, 1914-1944.* pp. 15.

campaigning against the war. Moreover, the war put his strong beliefs in progress, democracy, civilization and human nature to the test.

1.1 Ethics: A War of Prestige

Russell's radical stance against the war caused many people to regard him as a pacifist, a misinterpretation that later would become more nuanced. Historian Ronald Clark rightly states that Russell's attitude towards the war has often been misinterpreted by people who thought of him as an all-out pacifist and by people who thought he lacked appreciation for his country.[18] In many political writings he stated that not every war is unjust; war is not inherently wrong. He felt that he often had to remind his critics of this conviction. For example, in *Principles of Social Reconstruction* (1916) he stated: 'I have never been a complete pacifist and have at no time maintained that all who wage war are to be condemned. I have held the view, which I should have thought was that of common sense, that some wars have been justified and others not.'[19] When the war broke out Russell stuck to that view. In *Justice in Wartime* (1916), a collection of essays written from fall 1914 onwards, he differentiates four types of war: wars of colonization, wars of principle, wars of self-defense and wars of prestige. He considered the first two most likely to be justified, the third as rarely justified and the last version can never be justified. Russell, in line with the nineteenth century liberal traditions, had no direct objections towards wars of colonization, because he considered it a way of extending the civilized world and it would lead to the merit of a survival of the fittest.[20] The good cause of those wars would become clear after the war was over. It should be noted, however, that his views on imperialism quickly changed as tensions between the colonized and the colonizers started to grow.

It is in these ethics of war that his utilitarian tradition is most apparent; his rational, almost mathematical approach to war is characterized by Russell's continuous weighing of the causes versus

[18] Clark, Ronald. *The Life of Bertrand Russell*. Jonathan Cape and Weidenfeld & Nicolson. New York, 1975. pp. 245.
[19] Russell, Bertrand. *The Principles of Social Reconstruction.* pp. 90.
[20] Russell, Bertrand. "The Ethics of War" in: *Justice in Wartime.* Spokesman, Nottingham, 1916. pp. 27.

the means. Historian Alan Ryan argues that Russell was 'not a pacifist, because he was a consequentialist'[21], meaning that he considered war uncontrollable, that it aroused vulgar passions and would in any situation set civilization back. Fighting a war for futile motives would therefore be highly destructive. Sometimes, a war could be worth fighting, only if the outcome would be a general improvement that outweighed the means.

Russell's ethics in *Justice in Wartime* were a restatement of the views he held since the beginning of the twentieth century. He had briefly supported the English cause in the Boer War of 1900 under the influence of socialist Sidney Webb (1859-1947); but Russell claimed that he abandoned this perspective less than a year later.[22] This change of opinion during the Boer War formed the 'conversion' to his specific type of pacifism. A decade after the Boer War he wrote: 'At the beginning of the war I was an imperialist more or less. In the middle of it, for other reasons, I had a sudden "conversion", a change of heart, which brought with it a love of humanity & a horror of force, & incidentally made me a pro-Boer.'[23] The new insights inspired Russell to write what would become one of his famous articles, entitled "The Free Man's Worship" (1903). It attempts to grasp the empty and tragic predicament of human existence. There is nothing in life for man to hold on to: no life after death, no God; the cosmos will not yield to the wishes of humanity. Russell tried to find a way to avoid the loneliness and the isolated position of the human being. People, he concluded, must therefore turn inwards for meaning instead of worshipping the non-human world of, for instance, tragedy and war. Russell wrote in a letter to his friend Miss Rinder in the summer of 1918:

> 'The free man's worship is merely the expression of the pacifist outlook when it was new to me (…). How could

[21] Ryan, Alan. *Bertrand Russell. A Political Life.* Hill & Wang, New York, 1988. pp. 178.
[22] Russell, Bertrand. "My Mental Development" in: *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell.* pp. 47.
[23] Letters from Russell, courtesy of the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, no. 49, 2 May 1911. Quoted in: Clark, Ronald. *The Life of Bertrand Russell.* pp. 86.

> any one, approving the free man's worship, expect me to join in the trivial self-righteous moral condemnation of the Germans? (…) There is a possibility in human minds of something mysterious as the night-wind, deep as the sea, calm as the stars and strong as Death, a mystic contemplation, the 'intellectual love of God'. Those who have known it cannot *believe* in wars any longer, or in any kind of hot struggle. If I could give to others what has come to me in this way, I could make them too feel the futility of fighting. But I do not know how to communicate it: when I speak, they stare, applaud, or smile, but do not understand.'[24]

The reasons were thus merely emotional, arising from a feeling of solidarity with the whole of mankind; an expansion of thought as if one were to look down on earth from space, while realizing the humbleness of humankind. In practice, this change of heart was the first sign of Russell becoming more pragmatic in his political views, and becoming more drawn to the egalitarian aspects of socialism while realizing that his rather elitist liberal background was not self-evident. The development in his thought would lead him later to the central core of his political thought, namely, in the words of historian Ryan Alan, the belief that the 'liberal virtues of freedom, toleration and individualism no longer shelter easily under laissez-faire and capitalist economy; what we need is democratic socialism at home and some form of effective international authority abroad.'[25] This change of heart shaped his attitude towards war in the next seven decades of his life. He had not, however, been publicly active during the Boer war. Russell's newly revaluated political perspectives towards war became most evident in practice in 1914.

In the case of wars of principle, one or both sides are convinced of a certain belief. This was the case, for example, in the Protestant and Catholic wars or the English and American civil wars. Later, he would also consider the Soviet revolution of 1917 as a

[24] Russell in a letter to Miss Rinder, 30 July 1918. Miss Rinder worked at the No-Conscription Fellowship. Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume II, 1914-1944.* pp. 88-89.
[25] Ryan, Alan. *Bertrand Russell. A Political Life.* pp. 144.

matter of principle. The difficulty with these wars is that it is unclear when a principle is of 'genuine value to mankind'. The only solution Russell provides is that the motives should be skeptically scrutinized. Although he admits that domination by Germany would violate democracy, he rejects the claim that the war of 1914 was a war in defense of the principle of democracy: when the Allies are victorious and peace is settled, they could not force democracy upon Germany: 'it is almost a sign of yielding to undue impatience when they believe that what is valuable in their ideals can be furthered by substituting force for a peaceful persuasion.' [26] In other words, democracy can never be imposed on a country from the outside. Sometimes wars of principle are justified; only when the 'good part' of man's principles makes war necessary.

Contrastingly, Russell thought that wars caused by prestige are never justified, and he regarded the First World War exactly as such. He admitted that during the war other elements also became important, but prestige formed the initial cause and therefore it was the most important aspect. According to Russell, wars of prestige are characterized by irrationality, a desire for triumph and pride of rulers. Men are unwilling to be humiliated and they purely act in the name of honor. Politicians who pursue such an arrogant policy are too distanced from everyday life, and 'if any real progress is to be made in introducing sanity into international relations, these relations must henceforth be in the hands of men less aloof and less aristocratic, more in touch with common life, and more emancipated from the prejudices of a bygone age.'[27] The latter requirement refers to nineteenth century laissez-faire, politicians who continued to pursue that policy were either naïve or ignorant in Russell's view. A war of prestige is fought in 'blindness and delusion' and nothing is at stake except the ego of rulers.

Russell's is a plausible description, but could the war not be considered a matter of self-defense? Yes it could, he explained, but unfortunately the motive of self-defense is proclaimed by all nations

[26] Russell, Bertrand. "The Ethics of War" in: *Justice in Wartime*. pp. 32.
[27] Ibid. pp. 36.

in all wars, and forms therefore insufficient justification.[28] Historian Michael Howard describes that in the summer of 1914, every government was able to make out a plausible case. The British were fighting to face the greatest European threat since Napoleon and to preserve the law of nations.[29] Nations have, therefore, no automatic right to defend themselves. Both sides claimed that conquest was the only means of self-defense, but in the modern age domination of one country over the other is futile. Norman Angell had pronounced this five years earlier, and Russell also firmly believed that 'the objects for which men have fought in the past, whether just or unjust, are no longer to be achieved amongst civilized nations.'[30] In practice, this meant that 'unless the Germans could sink our fleet or starve us out by means of submarines, neither of which is all likely, they could not decide the conflict in their favor.'[31] For these reasons, the German threat was best faced by non-resistance. Russell considered prestige the fundamental cause of the war and if only that aspect would be undermined by a policy of non-resistance, the futility of fighting would become clear to both the Kaiser and German public opinion: 'if Germans, instead of being resisted by force of arms, had been passively permitted to establish themselves wherever they pleased, the halo of glory and courage surrounding the brutality of military success would have been absent.'[32] Russell would stick to his view that non-resistance would have been the best remedy for the First World War throughout his life.

During the war, Russell's ethics of war did not change. He had considered Britain's neutrality essential from the very beginning. He argued that a European war would by no means be a 'war which will end all wars' as it was proclaimed by writer H.G. Wells (1866-1946) and others, but rather the end of civilization.[33] He firmly believed that

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[28] Ibid. pp. 30-37.
[29] Howard, Michael. *The First World War*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2002. pp. 34.
[30] Russell, Bertrand. "The Ethics of War" in: *Justice in Wartime*. pp. 34.
[31] Russell, Bertrand. "Can England and Germany Be Reconciled after the War?" 10 Feb. 1915. In: *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell Vol. 13 Prophecy and Dissent 1914-16*. Unwin Hyman, London, 1988. pp. 75.
[32] Russell, Bertrand. "The Ethics of War" in: *Justice in Wartime*. pp. 34.
[33] Russell, Bertrand. "Why Nations Love War" in: *Justice in Wartime.* pp. 26.

the First World War was the source of the twentieth century crises still to come. About forty years after the war he retained the view he had in 1914:

> 'Consider by way of contrast what would have happened if Britain had remained neutral in that war. The war would have been short. It would have ended in victory for Germany. America would not have been dragged in. Britain would have remained strong and prosperous. Germany would not have been driven into Nazism, Russia, though it would have had a revolution, would in all likelihood have not had the Communist Revolution, since it could not in a short war have been reduced to the condition of utter chaos which prevailed in 1917.'[34]

1.2 Public Opinion: Against the Stream

Russell knew that regardless of whether the war was justified or anticipated, Britain was at war. The ultimatum issuing the neutrality of Belgium remained unanswered and war was declared on Germany on 4 August. On this day, philosopher George Bernard Shaw's (1856-1950) well-known comment 'when war is declared we all go mad', fitted the British public quite well. Russell was amazed by the warlike spirit among the people. It was only three days earlier that he had still found himself surrounded by supporters who agreed with him that Britain's neutrality should be preserved. He had written on August 1st that he had not 'found a single person, of whatever party or class, who is in favor of war, or thinks anybody else would be.'[35] This sudden change of public opinion left Russell even more disillusioned. Although he was still able to find some objectors to the war, albeit often for different motives, he was puzzled by the fact that only very few people shared his conviction. Russell was frustrated that he did not succeed in convincing his friends and fellow-intellectuals through argument and debate. In his article "An Appeal to the Intellectuals of Europe" (1915) he expressed his disappointment about the

[34] Russell, Bertrand. "Adaptation: An Autobiographical Epitome" in: *Portraits from Memory and Other Essays*. pp. 11-12.
[35] Clark, Ronald. *The Life of Bertrand Russell*. pp. 245.

complacency and irrationality of the intelligentsia, the 'civilised men' of which Russell thought highly: 'men of learning should be the guardians of one of the sacred fires that illumine the darkness into which the human spirit is born: upon them depends the ideal of just thought, of disinterested pursuit of truth, which, if it had existed more widely, would have sufficed alone to prevent the present horror.'[36] But many of his friends, including the Whitehead family, turned out to be in favor of British participation, and they argued how Russell's behavior was unpatriotic and excessive.

Russell had a talent for quickly discovering the facts. He was, for instance, right to be skeptical about the reports of German atrocities in Belgium, which convinced the public that intervention was essential. Much later it became generally known how these reports were highly exaggerated in order to increase support for the war. Russell sadly realized, however, that war was not forced upon people by their 'Machiavellian' governments, as he had always assumed, but that they actually enjoyed the prospect of war. Neither Germany's aggression nor the ambition of the British government could fully explain the spirit of war; it was primarily to be found in something more fundamental: human nature.[37] He became extremely intrigued by the psychological causes of war and made an impressive study out of it, initiated by his book *Principles of Social Reconstruction* (1916). In his view, the relation between psychology and politics had been highly underestimated by political commentators. He diagnosed how 'this whole collective state of mind is the instinctive disposition of human nature, stronger, no doubt, in some nations, such as the Germans, than in others, but present, to some degree, wherever vigour and vital energy are to be found.'[38] He would maintain this interest in psychology throughout his life; decades later he addressed the same issues in his Nobel prize speech entitled "Politically Important Desires" (1950). Russell from 1914 onwards made it his object 'to analyse and try to understand this widespread enjoyment of war- a phenomenon (…) of the greatest

[36] Russell, Bertrand. "An Appeal to the Intellectuals of Europe" in: *Justice in Wartime.* pp. 18.
[37] Russell, Bertrand. *Principles of Social Reconstruction*. pp. 10.
[38] Russell, Bertrand. "Why Nations Love War" in: *Justice in Wartime*. pp. 59.

importance (…).'[39] He sadly concluded that 'impulse has more effect than conscious purpose in moulding men's lives.'[40] It was exactly impulse replacing rationality that made the question of why men desire war so difficult: reasons were emotional rather than rational. In the preface of *Justice in Wartime* he explains how throughout the war, his views on the future and on the nature of mankind were inconsistent: 'in such matters, the development of events inevitably somewhat modifies first impressions.' He goes on to state that his view on human nature was neither wholly pessimistic nor wholly optimistic: '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.'[41] Despite his disappointment in the masses, he continued to think worse about the ruling elite. He argued in 1915:

> 'Behind the rulers, in whom pride has destroyed humanity, stand the patient populations, who suffer and die. To them the folly of war and the failure of governments are becoming evident as never before. To their humanity and collective wisdom we must appeal if civilization is not to perish utterly in suicidal delirium.'[42]

In other words, the masses were not to blame. The people simply were not able to express themselves and they needed more time to discover how futile and refutable the war was. This view mainly springs from Russell's persistent Whig elitism, his idea, basically, that some people are worth more than others. He expected more from intellectuals or aristocrats than from the masses, a distinction he maintained during his life. His elitism is an important reason for his frustration towards governments and politicians. Historian Bart Schultz argues that his elitism caused the most criticism and objection, not so much among his contemporaries but rather from the historians and scholars who

[39] Ibid. pp. 58.
[40] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume II, 1914-1944.* pp. 20.
[41] Russell, Bertrand. *Justice in Wartime*. xiii.
[42] Russell, Bertrand. "Can England and Germany be Reconciled after the War?" in: *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell Vol. 13 Prophecy and Dissent 1914-16*. pp. 77.

analyze him. He states that 'the bleakest side of Russell's politics is his sometimes despairing elitism. In rather too classical utilitarian fashion, he occasionally wondered whether the vast bulk of mankind did not in fact require a brave new world, whether his own view of happiness was not unsuitable for the herd.'[43] Russell's elitism was a legacy of the nineteenth century and his aristocratic background. Although it became increasingly immoral to hold such views in modern times, it greatly characterized Russell's political convictions: his idea that preserving civilization was the highest aim; that politicians and intellectuals should know better; and that the masses required protection and guidance. He did, however, realize how the masses were influential and that 'peace can only be preserved if public opinion desires peace in most of the great nations.'[44] The public enthusiasm for war did cause Russell to develop a slightly more pessimistic view of human nature, but simultaneously, it was exactly human nature, he argued, in which hope was found. He remained very reluctant to abandon his nineteenth century faith in human reason. American scholar William Orton mentioned this modern dilemma in 1924: 'Mr. Russell is accordingly most optimistic where he is most abstract. But it would be asking much of any European that he should base his optimism on the concrete.'[45] Through his personal pursuit of illuminating the darker sides of human nature, people should become conscious of their natural instincts and irrational tendencies. Without having read Freud, Russell was one of the first to observe that fear and distrust of foreigners are ingrained in human instinct, and that together with the desire for excitement, triumph, power and honor in a context of nationalism, war is easily provoked.

1.3 Action: Passionate Protest

Soon after the war broke out, Russell moved from passive despondency into active agitation. Britain knew no conscription until later in the war, but Russell was above the conscription age regardless.

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[43] Schultz, Bart. "Bertrand Russell in Ethics and Politics" in: *Ethics*, Vol. 102, No. 3, April 1992. pp. 627.
[44] Russell, Bertrand. "Is A Permanent Peace Possible?" in: *Justice in Wartime*. pp. 98.
[45] Orton, William. "The Social Philosophy of Mr. Bertrand Russell" in: *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2, June 1924. pp. 211.

He was an individualist by nature but he realized that cooperation and association were necessary in order to serve his cause. As historian Ronald Jager argues, he quickly assessed the different forms of pacifism that existed and simultaneously revealed their weaknesses. He also determined the fundamental flaws in pacifism in general: non-resistance would not be able to overthrow tyranny. His main objection was the passive stance and futility of pacifism. Russell vented his impatience with other pacifists in a letter to Lady Ottoline in 1915: 'this morning I read a paper to a Pacifist Conference. They were an awful crew. Pacifists are really no good.'[46] His own views on war were, as Jager rightly acknowledges, never dogmatic. Russell's pacifism was in this sense merely 'a process of eliminating the intolerable alternatives'.[47] By fervently following his own passionate convictions on the war, Russell became an outsider and an eccentric. Ottoline Morrell, however, supported him and shared his views. It was at her residence that some pacifist members of parliament started to hold meetings, which led to the formation of the anti-war movement called the Union of Democratic Control, a pressure group with members including Norman Angell, E.D. Morel, Charles Trevelyan and Philip Morrell. The UDC replaced Russell's initial plans of creating a new political party, which was meant to become a mixture of Radicals and Labour.[48] The UDC's aims were to increase parliamentary influence on foreign policy and to have a moderate peace settlement. Russell had always shown his ability to devote much time and energy to administrative work, for example in his activities for women's suffrage. His activities were mainly in the field of anti-war propaganda through writing and speaking. From the beginning, however, Russell observed that the UDC lacked the efficiency he would have liked it to have. On 11 July 1915 Russell wrote: 'The U.D.C. is too mild and troubled with irrelevances. It will be all right

[46] Russell to Ottoline Morrell, 8 July 1915. Cited in: *Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell Vol. 13 Prophecy and Dissent 1914-16.* pp. 145.
[47] Jager, Ronald. *The Development of Bertrand Russell's Philosophy*. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1972. pp. 446.
[48] Vellacott, Jo. *Bertrand Russell and the Pacifists in the First World War*. Harvester Press, Brighton, 1980. pp. 8.

after the war, but not now. I wish good people were not so mild.'[49] But in any case, he had found allies and an outlet through which action could be undertaken.

Unlike before the war, Russell had immense faith in his own convictions, and he often expressed them in apocalyptic terms. The reason for this was his incredible disgust for the war, which was, in his eyes 'a horror, an infamy, an overwhelming and unmitigated disaster, making the whole of life ghastly.'[50] The main thing that Russell was missing in the UDC was exactly this apocalyptic thought; the absolutism and radicalism that was needed in his view to alter the circumstances. From September 1914 until the summer of 1915 Russell remained loyal to the UDC until a better alternative arose: the No-Conscription Fellowship. It was established in 1914 by a group of young men who would refuse conscription if it were to be introduced, and it was led by both socialist and Christian pacifists. Conscription had become law on 27 January 1915, and Russell felt sympathetic with the conscientious objectors.

He devoted all his time to the NCF causes, but again, he experienced a feeling of loneliness and isolation. His brief friendship with writer D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930) in 1915 shows how Russell was in a peculiar way attracted to radicalism and similarly admired a rebellious stance in others. Initially, Russell admired Lawrence's passionate dedication to politics and found himself able to relate to the fact that 'Lawrence was equally full of rebellion' (…) 'we both imagined there was something important to be said about the reform of human relations, and we did not at first realize we took diametrically opposite views as to the kind of reform that was needed.' Lawrence became increasingly annoyed by Russell's faith in reason, democracy and mankind, while he started to appeal to an ideological 'mystical philosophy' of blood-consciousness. Russell later said that Lawrence had become the mere mouth-piece of his extremist German wife, and that his thought prefigured the 'interwar madness' and the Nazi doctrines 'leading straight to Auschwitz' (…).

[49] Quoted in: Ibid. pp. 52-53.
[50] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume II, 1914-1944.* pp. 78.

'The world between the wars was attracted to madness. Of this attraction Nazism was the most emphatic expression. Lawrence was a suitable exponent of this cult of insanity.'[51] Russell ended the friendship, and neither adopted nor considered Lawrence's views. But his brief flirtation with unreason did give him new inspiration. His admiration for Lawrence's emotionalism shows how Russell, while following his individual and rational course, longed for an ally with a similar passion. Historian Jo Vellacott rightly states that Russell's attraction to radicalism would abide; that his attitude would later become more refined and his pacifism more limited.[52]

The pacifist undertakings had slowly worn Russell out and he decided to return to philosophy. In the fall of 1917 he expressed his frustrations to Ottoline: 'Pacifist work, except by those who were *not* pacifists from the start, seems to me now quite useless, and the sense of futility drives one mad. But since I decided to give it up, I have grown sane again, but rather sober and drab…'[53] Ironically, the very last effort Russell made for the NCF, caused him to spend six months in Brixton prison as prisoner nr. 2917. Although he had sometimes anticipated obtaining a prison sentence in 1916 and 1917, he was unexpectedly arrested around the same time he abandoned his political activities in the last year of the war. *The Tribunal*[54] asked Russell to write an article for their front page on 3 January, 1918. In this article, Russell casually expressed his disappointment in the United States:

> 'Unless peace comes soon there will be starvation throughout Europe (…) Men will fight each other for possession of the bare necessities of life (…) The American Garrison which will by that time be occupying England and France, whether or not they will prove efficient against the Germans, will no doubt be capable of intimidating strikers, an occupation to which the American Army is accustomed when at home.'

[51] Ibid. pp. 22-23.
[52] Vellacott, Jo. *Bertrand Russell and the Pacifists in the First World War*. Harvester Press, Brighton, 1980. pp. 7.
[53] Russell to Ottoline Morrell, 23 December 1917. Ottoline Morrell Papers/1476. Quoted in: Ibid. pp. 220.
[54] *The Tribunal* was a journal published by the No-Conscription Fellowship.

With this expression he violated the 'Defence of the Realm Act'.[55] He also did not refrain from mingling in some remarks on the British government, although this was not what he was punished for: 'I do not say that these thoughts are in the mind of the Government. All the evidence tends to show that there are no thoughts whatever in their mind, and that they live from hand to mouth consoling themselves with ignorance and sentimental twaddle.' Magistrate Dickinson pronounced a bitter sentence: 'Mr. Russell seems to have lost all sense of decency and fairness, and has gone out of his way to insult by deliberate and designed sneer the army of a great nation which is closely allied to us (…) The offence is a very despicable one.'[56] Russell, partially due to the fact that he was allowed to read and write limitlessly on anything except the war, accepted the punishment with honor. It was a relief from his hard work and he wanted to come across as a man of his word.

Despite his cooperation with many others during the war, Russell did not feel completely content with the pacifist cause. When he was released from prison in September 1918, Russell resigned from the NCF. He greatly admired colleagues such as politician Clifford Allen (1889-1939), but he remained an individualist. He admitted to Lady Ottoline how had never felt at home in any form of cooperation: 'I tried hard to identify myself with the N.C.F. but it was no good- I don't belong among them really.'[57] In November 1919, the NCF held a meeting where Russell spoke. Although he felt pessimistic about what the NCF, other pacifists or himself had accomplished, he expressed his general admiration for pacifists and said: 'to stand out against a war, when it comes, a man must have within himself some passion so strong and so indestructible that mass hysteria cannot touch it.'[58] Expressions like these were not very spontaneous, however.

[55] DORA, introduced on 8 August 1914, gave the government powers to suppress criticism and punish dissenters and conscientious objectors.
[56] Russell in the Tribunal. Quoted in: Wood, Alan. *Bertrand Russell: The Passionate Sceptic.* pp. 111-112.
[57] Russell to Ottoline on 26 October 1918. Quoted in: *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell Volume 14: Pacifism and Revolution 1916-18.* pp. 443.
[58] Quoted in: Vellacott, Jo. *Bertrand Russell and the Pacifists in the First World War*. pp. 224.

Russell consciously tried to think positively of his fellow anti-war activists, who, in his eyes, were often too self-righteous and too fanatical. According to Caroline Moorehead, one of Russell's biographers, Russell felt also unhappy about the fact that he had spent all his time during the war with the pacifists. In the whole four years, it was only in prison where he had been able to read and write on philosophy. For two and a half years, however, the UDC and the UCF had put him in contact with new friends and acquaintances, and provided the opportunity for Russell to communicate his unpopular message more effectively. His attitude in the war was, as he described it himself, 'one of intense and passionate protest.'[59] After the armistice was settled in 1918, however, Russell felt despondent over the fact that his efforts 'had not saved a single life or shortened the war by a minute.'[60] The main thing his pacifist campaign had shown was that 'it is possible to remain sane and courageous even in war-time.'[61] In other words, he had never been an accomplice in the barbarous actions of the belligerents; he had never given up hope; he may have persuaded a few people; he had acquired new insights and pursued a new vocation.

1.4 Politics: Russell versus the Government

Russell was outraged by the government when they declared war. Especially since his ancestors had all been proud and dedicated liberals, he stated that 'the friends of progress have been betrayed by their chosen leaders.'[62] After several months, after the hopes on a short war vanished in the spring of 1915, Russell reached a point of severe depression. Lady Ottoline had moved to Garsington, and he believed himself to be in an extremely isolated position. He felt more vulnerable to the charges of his critics who accused him of a lack of patriotism, moral decadence and being pro-German. He was horrified

[59] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume II, 1914-1944.* pp. 78.
[60] Ibid. pp. 40.
[61] Russell to Lady Ottoline, 29 March 1918. Quoted in: *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell Volume 14: Pacifism and Revolution 1916-18.* pp. 389.
[62] Russell, Bertrand. "Friends of Progress Betrayed" 4 August 1914. Unpublished letter to the editor of *The Nation*. In: *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell Vol. 13 Prophecy and Dissent 1914-16*. pp. 4.

by the use of gas at the frontline and distressed by the death of young Cambridge poet Rupert Brooke (1887-1915).[63] Moreover, Russell's hopes on limiting the war were dashed as Britain was now preparing for a long war. On 20 May, the new Coalition government was installed and they had no intent of pulling out. Russell could only hope that the follies of the government would quickly lead to its downfall. He rightly remarked that victory and peace are simply not compatible; the government, however, refused to admit that victory had become impossible.

Russell looked, like many dissenters, with hope towards the United States. He considered Europeans as a gathering of egocentric and short-sighted rivals, whereas America was initially portrayed by him as the only ray of light for the world. In 1916 he sent a desperate letter to President Wilson, asking him to bring peace in Europe by making the belligerents stop fighting. Russell somewhat naively assumed that the president had complete power to change the situation and that Wilson was able to persuade the European nations to settle peace. In January 1917, America entered the war to support the Allies. Russell's standpoint about this was simple: the war had to be ended as soon as possible, and America's entry would by no means shorten the war. The European powers would reach exhaustion quicker without America's support, and America losing its innocence would change things permanently.[64] Meanwhile, the belligerents stubbornly continued the war simply because, Russell explained, 'the Governments are proud and the peoples are afraid.'[65] The centralization of power, the punishing of dissenters, censorship, and prosecuting conscientious objectors limited every citizen in their freedom. Fear was the central cause of war and the government and the press were guilty of spreading these feelings among the people.

Regardless of his sense of betrayal, there was no doubt in Russell's mind that the German government was much more to blame

[63] Russell in correspondence with Lady Ottoline on 10 May 1915. Quoted in: Vellacott, Jo. *Bertrand Russell and the Pacifists in the First World War*. pp. 21.
[64] Russell, Bertrand. "America's Entry into the War" in: *The Tribunal*, 19 April 1917. In: *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell Vol. 14 Pacifism and Revolution 1916-18*. Unwin & Hyman, London, 1995. pp. 129.
[65] Russell, Bertrand. "Why Not Peace Negotiations?" in: *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell Vol. 14 Pacifism and Revolution 1916-18*. pp. 129.

than the British. That did not provide, however, any justification for the British policy. Russell resented the popular idea that if the Germans were wrong, the British must be right. By granting support to Belgium and France, war became unavoidable. British foreign policy had removed all opportunities towards a moderated peace; it had aroused German pride and nationalism and strengthened the German gust for war. In a historical overview Russell argued how the German nationalistic desires hardly differed from the British and French before 1914: trade, territory and prestige.[66] Britain fulfilled all its purposes with small wars outside Europe, and Germany with a great war in Europe. Russell held nations to the same standards. He was right to nuance the common conviction that Germany was morally inferior to Britain. When Russell lived in Germany before the turn of the century, he observed that the Kaiser was 'one of the sources of the evil in the world', but he thought that the tendency of the people to think in such polemical terms was over-exaggerated and self-righteous.[67]

Russell described his relation to the government in 1916 as 'very bad'. He was prosecuted for writing the article "Two Years' Hard Labour for Refusing to Disobey the Dictates of Conscience". It was the sentence passed on conscientious objector Ernst Everett. Russell was fined a hundred pounds, which he refused to pay but his friends secretly paid for him. In September he got into an argument with the War Office about his propagandist speeches to –often pacifist- munition workers. He was consequently prohibited to travel into certain areas in which spies might be able to penetrate, such as the coast line. It was clear that the government was greatly annoyed by Russell's actions:

> 'For these various compliments on the part of the Government, I should have thrown up pacifist work, as I had become persuaded that it was entirely futile. Perceiving however, that the Government thought otherwise, I supposed I might be mistaken, and continued.

[66] Russell, Bertrand. "The Entente Policy, 1904-1915" in: *Justice in Wartime*. pp. 131, 140.
[67] Ibid. pp. 120.

> Apart from the question whether I was doing any good, I could not well stop when fear of consequences might have seemed to be my motive.'[68]

The government thus reinvigorated Russell's work. His six months prison sentence in 1918 would form the summit of this cat-and-mouse situation. After the war, Russell continued to criticize the governments' policy towards conscientious objectors.[69] It seemed as if, of all the belligerents, only Britain was not releasing dissenters. He was also disappointed about the fact that his hopes for reconstructing international affairs and dismantling the military regime were not realized in practice. Besides the fact that the war was over, despairingly little had changed.

Disillusioned by the liberal government, Russell was drawn to the socialists. This was one of the main changes in Russell's political stance regarding national politics. The primary reason for this change was his idea that capitalism leads to war. He sided with the Independent Labour Party (ILP). Despite his conviction that a the policy of laissez faire had become impossible in the modern age, for someone with an upbringing in an aristocratic liberal Whig tradition, this was a considerable shift in a relative short amount of time. He had denied being a socialist in 1915 and found himself even more radical than some leaders of the ILP in 1916.[70] Russell had, in this regard, little trouble with renouncing his previous views. His shift towards socialism would, however, never become complete and dogmatic; he quickly articulated his ideas about the pros and cons of the different forms of socialism. He gave, for instance, a lecture in Manchester called "The Pitfalls of Socialism" in 1916, which was later reprinted in the book *Political Ideals* (1917). In his more popular book *Roads to Freedom* (1918), a work primarily written during his time in Brixton prison, Russell evaluated the dogmas of socialism, anarchism and

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[68] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume II, 1914-1944.* pp. 33.
[69] See for example: "Why Are the Conscientious Objectors Not Released?" 6 February 1919. *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell Volume 14: Pacifism and Revolution 1916-18.* pp. 447.
[70] Vellacott, Jo. *Bertrand Russell and the Pacifists in the First World War*. pp. 159-160.

syndicalism. He concluded that guild socialism with a tendency towards anarchism would be the best organization of society. He was attracted to the solidarity and freedom of a decentralized socialism. When wealth is more equally distributed, people would be less prone to envy each other. A limited government and bureaucracy would give people the freedom they desire. Work would become less sober, and perhaps less necessary, so that people do not experience the sense of boredom they felt before 1914. Russell still had enough faith in human beings to argue that legislation and punishment would become increasingly unnecessary.[71] He based these views on what he thought had caused the enthusiasm for the war. It was a subject he could not forget about. In his view, envy and boredom were important motives that could be prevented in the future by reorganizing the national state system towards guild-socialism with a hint of anarchism.

Although he was initially enthusiastic about the Russian revolution in 1917, as a result of his skepticism towards the tsars, Russell was never a Marxist. He both rejected the idea that the only evil power in human relations is economic power and the ideal that centralized socialism could work in practice. During his stay in Germany he had already learned about Marxism and explicitly denounced it. In the 1920's Russell had traveled to Russia with a Labour delegation, where he had met Lenin, Trotsky and other prominent individuals. He was disappointed and appalled by the conditions in Russia. Communism in his eyes was a form of religion, just as he had described Marxism as a religion in *German Social Democracy* (1896). It was too dogmatic and ideological; too aloof from reality. Russell remained a liberal in many respects: he never wanted the government to take more control since 'all law and government is in itself in some degree an evil, only justifiable when it prevents other and greater evils.'[72] On an international level, however, he argued that a powerful world government was necessary to preserve peace.

[71] Russell, Bertrand. *Roads to Freedom. Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism.* pp. 210.
[72] Ibid. pp. 121.

1.5 Peace: Internationalism

As early as July 1915, Russell realized that a German defeat was likely to cause revenge. In an article entitled "The Philosophy of Pacifism" he stated that 'the ordinary German would regard defeat, not as evidence of his guilt, but as evidence of our artful diplomacy. He would resolve to be even better prepared next time, and would follow the advice of his militarists even more faithfully than in the past.'[73] He resented the bitter policy adopted during the peace treaty of Versailles exactly for this reason: underscoring Germany's defeat would logically lead to hostility. The League of Nations was in his view successful in arousing peace sentiments, but it could not satisfy the further reaching desires of the pacifists. The League was too dysfunctional in Russell's view:

> 'At the close of the great war, one might have expected an unusually keen consciousness of the evils of nationalism, and an unusually warm welcome for any proposal tending to minimize the risk of war. Yet the utmost that President Wilson could secure was his League of Nations, a body which rejected Germany and Russia and was rejected by the United States- a body moreover which, in order to safeguard the precious sovereignty of its component nations, can take no decision except unanimously.'[74]

Russell had somewhat naively over-estimated the desire for reorganization after the war. He stated in 1915: 'In all nations, every sane man and woman will desire a completely new system in international affairs. The only men who will desire to prolong the present system are statesmen, sensational journalists, and armament makers.'[75] The changes remained limited, however. Not only because the politicians were reluctant, but also because the people were not showing signs of enthusiasm.

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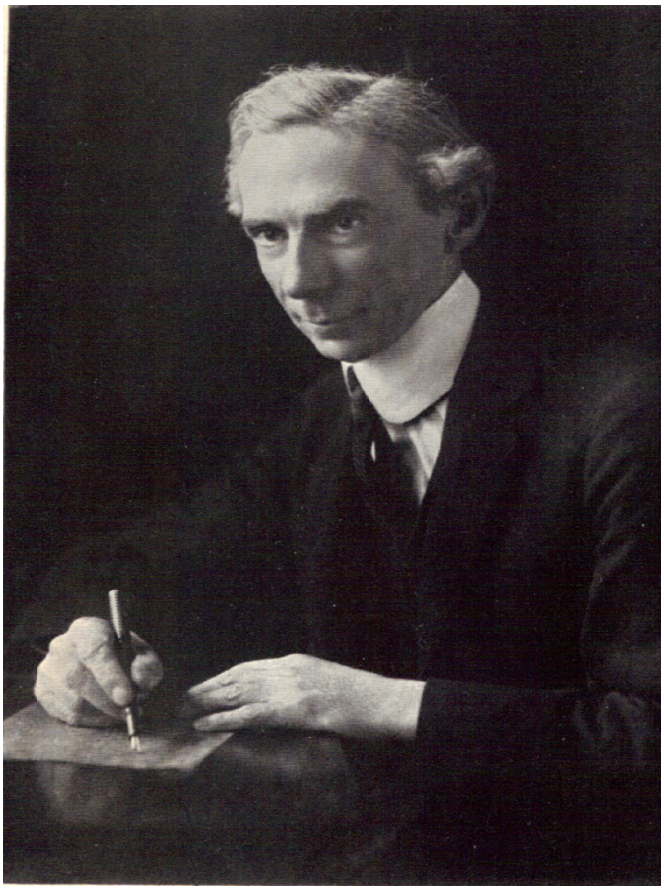
[73] Russell, Bertrand. "The Philosophy of Pacifism" July 1915. in: *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell Vol. 13 Prophecy and Dissent 1914-16*. pp. 149.
[74] Russell, Bertrand. *The Prospects of Industrial Civilization*. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1923. pp. 83.
[75] Russell, Bertrand. "Is Permanent Peace Possible?" in: *Justice in Wartime*. pp. 93.

Despite the many drawbacks and disillusions he encountered in this period, Russell always remained confident that the good in mankind would prevail and ultimately change the circumstances. While carrying out his political convictions, he imagined his ideal of what the world should be like; he envisioned a world government. He argued that nationalism should be pushed aside while all humankind must be reconsidered. Also, the realization that war in the modern age is worthless must be spread across nations. Russell saw great advantages in, for instance, an international navy, which would make all rivalry obsolete. His utopia of world government remained, however, rather abstract and vague. He held idealistic ideas like these during most of his life, admitting that humanity may not yet be ready for such a change. Russell rightly observed how peace could only be preserved by the willingness of the people; and this was the main obstacle to overcome. This question was also addressed in the book *The Prospects of Industrial Civilization* (1923), written together with his wife Dora (1894-1986). Herein it became clear that Russell's idea of world government was far-reaching: it was to obtain complete sovereignty by regulating issues like migration, economics and legislation. The main advantages of that world government, which was to become a sort of socialist commonwealth, were the more equal distribution of wealth and the prevention of war. It is interesting to see how Russell, like solving a mathematical problem, first thoroughly analyzed the causes of war before he assessed the solutions. Removing national pride, rivalry and boredom were the main aims to achieve. All this was only likely to be achieved through one dominating power, presumably the United States, imposing a world government on the other nations. The League of Nations did not come close to the ambitious expectations Russell held.

1.6 Conclusions

The period surrounding the First World War showed Russell's difficulties in balancing on the border between the traditional and safe Victorian and Edwardian eras and the modern twentieth century bringing new insecurities. The Boer War proved to be the prelude to his political thought in the following decades. His emotional change

of heart at the beginning of the twentieth century caused him to believe that nineteenth century laissez faire no longer sufficed. "The Free Man's Worship" became the constitution of Russell's personal political attitude during his life. He formulated the fundamentals of his views quickly and eloquently during the First World War, specifically with *Principles of Social Reconstruction* and *Justice in Wartime.* His strategies were also clear: he approached war in a utilitarian, mathematical manner. Russell's views had not changed during the war; he still believed that not every war is unjust, but that the First World War was a futile war enflamed by greed, nationalism and self-righteousness. Disillusioned and amazed by the warlike spirit of the masses he became intrigued with the relation between politics and psychology. Despite the influence of public opinion, Russell remained most critical of the political elites. He felt that he had to do everything in his power to resist, because the war was destroying civilization by every passing minute. His rebellious nature, his compassion with mankind and his outrage towards the government caused him to hold an isolated position. The passive attitude of non-resistance frustrated him, and at times he found himself cynical, exhausted and pessimistic, but his conviction and solidarity with the world gave him strength. Russell temporarily worked in China in the 1920s and he wrote a considerable amount of books on both practical and theoretical philosophy. Although he also continued to write about politics, it was not until the 1930s that he returned to the issue of war. The central problem for Russell was in place: to what extent could a nation pursue the policy of non-resistance? It is exactly this problem that would become even more vexing during the rise of totalitarianism.



Bertrand Russell in 1916.

II ANOTHER WAY TO PEACE: 1930-1945

In 1931, Russell sincerely felt that the worst was still to come. The rise of Fascism and Communism was particularly worrisome for a 'British Whig, with a British love of compromise and moderation.'[76] In his view, the Second World War was a logical consequence of the first; it was largely due to punishments of Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. On a personal level, Russell had been inquiring about teaching in the United States as early as 1936, arguing that England 'is no place for children, with the imminent risk of war.'[77] He had separated from his second wife Dora in the early 1930s and she agreed with him taking their two children overseas. In 1938, Russell and his children escaped to the United States, where he taught at the University of California, the College of the City of New York and Harvard until 1944. From overseas, Russell remained as involved with world affairs as always. After fiercely clinging to his pacifism, he drastically changed his views in 1940 and advocated that the war must be fought in order to save civilization from the Nazis.

2.1 Ethics: A War of Principle

In his book *Freedom and Organization* (1934), Russell stressed the value of economical international organization for world peace. Through increasing interdependence, just as Norman Angell had argued in 1910, war between nations would become pointless. It was only through international organization, rather than pacifist sentiment, that mankind would be 'saved from collective suicide'.[78] His faith in

[76] Russell, Bertrand. *Sceptical Essays.* George Allen & Unwin, London, 1928. pp. 11.
[77] Feinberg, Barry; Kasritz, Ronald. *Bertrand Russell's America Volume I, 1896-1945*. pp. 127.
[78] Russell, Bertrand. *Freedom and Organization 1814-1914*. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1934. pp. 510.

structural organization of the international community was, however, temporary. Only two years later, Russell realized how organization still had a long road ahead and when the circumstances became increasingly urgent, he reclaimed his original strategy of advocating individual pacifism by writing the pacifist account *Which Way to Peace?* (1936), written with regard to the anxious times after the rise of Hitler in 1933. After calculating and assessing the different options in the early thirties, Russell consciously chose pacifism in the spring of 1936 as the best strategy to deal with the circumstances. With the book Russell attempted to assess the coming war and it is characterized by his apocalyptic descriptions of how destructive the imminent war would become. He considered air power particularly worrisome and argued that the British navy could not do much against war from the air. Russell still thought that the Nazis' motive was prestige and that non-resistance would prove the best means of undermining them. He therefore applied the exact same strategy of non-resistance as he had advocated in the First World War. By adopting a national policy of pacifism, which meant diminishing the army, navy and air force, the Nazis would have little to dominate and they would have no reason to feel threatened. Russell argued: 'if we refrained from force and violence, I do not think it can be doubted that the mood of the Germans would change.'[79] He also stressed that if any nation were to fight the Germans, they would surely become as sinful as them. Russell relied on theoretical psychological explanations, perhaps too heavily. He could not have foreseen the barbarous intents of the Nazis.

His pacifism was less radical than in 1914, but still explicitly visible in practice. Despite his inner struggle and doubts about the value of the policy of non-resistance, various examples show how Russell's pacifism was not limited to *Which Way to Peace?* He occasionally underscored his views in practice. For instance, he pointed out to journalists how he was an 'extreme pacifist' at his arrival in America in 1938.[80] Even on the issue of Czechoslovakia

[79] Russell, Bertrand. *Which Way to Peace?* Michael Joseph Ltd., Plymouth, 1936. pp. 143.
[80] Quoted in: Moorehead, Caroline. *Bertrand Russell. A Life.* pp. 428.

Russell held on to pacifism, urging to his ex-wife Dora on 5 November 1938 how 'the first result of an attempt at an armed defence would have been to expose the Czechs to German invasion, which would have been much worse for them than even what they are enduring now.'[81] Also, in 1939 he expressed his admiration for president Roosevelt's preference of neutrality. The combination of advocating pacifism while having personal doubts was due to the fact that Russell's attitude towards war was never a matter of principle. The circumstances increasingly undermined his ideas, but until the point of no return in 1940, he was to cling to his initial conviction.

His ethics of war remained identical to what he had claimed in *Justice in Wartime.* Also in *Which Way to Peace?* did Russell not object to war as such: 'my belief in absolute pacifism is limited to the present time, and depends upon the destructiveness of air warfare. In other times and other circumstances I should be prepared to consider gains and losses, and to concede that war *might* be worth while.'[82] This had been a consistent element in his thought since the Boer War. He had objected the First World War because of its particular characteristics: there was absolutely nothing at stake. It was, in his view, purely a war of prestige, created through an exaggerated nationalism, shortsighted and warlike authorities and irrational crowds. In contrast, he supported the Spanish government in the Spanish Civil War in 1936, because more harm would be done by submitting to the rebels than by resisting them and because Russell thought that any government had the right to pursue their interest within their own borders. But in the coming war, Russell understandably concluded, devastation would simply be far too great. To Elizabeth Trevelyan he explained; 'I am still a pacifist in the sense that I think peace the most important thing in the world. But I do not think there can be any peace in the world while Hitler prospers.'[83]

By 1940, Russell felt ashamed of *Which Way to Peace?* and he prevented further publication. As circumstances had changed, Russell claimed, employing violent means was essential for the survival of

[81] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume II 1914-1944.* pp. 225.
[82] Ibid. pp. 152.
[83] Moorehead, Caroline. *Bertrand Russell. A Life.* pp. 429.

civilization: 'the Second World War was a totally different matter. Very largely as a result of our follies, Nazi Germany had to be fought if human life was to remain tolerable.'[84] Was this war to become the so-called 'war of principle' as he had described in *Justice in Wartime*? Perhaps there was something at stake this time, the thought of Hitler and Stalin triumphant became increasingly unbearable to him. The wars of principle he had described twenty-five years earlier, the American and English civil wars or the Protestant and Catholic wars, were all wars that had changed the international situation permanently; they were necessary and for the better. Russell returned to utilitarianism: would Hitler be worse than war? In his autobiography he wrote about his dilemma:

> 'I had been able to view with reluctant acquiescence the possibility of the supremacy of the Kaiser's Germany; I thought that, although this would be an evil, it would not be so great an evil as a world war and its aftermath. But Hitler's Germany was a different matter. I found the Nazis utterly revolting – cruel, bigoted, and stupid (…) Although I clung to my pacifist convictions, I did so with increasing difficulty. When, in 1940, England was threatened with invasion, I realized that, throughout the First War, I had never seriously envisaged the possibility of utter defeat.'[85]

Did the idea of defeat alone inflict his change of thought, and was it purely the safety of England that worried him? Russell imagined non-resistance to be the friendly and unarmed welcoming of the Germans and to undergo their domination. To do so was to remove their motive for fighting: national pride. When Russell realized that England could not only be dominated by the Germans but rather literally defeated, he changed his mind. He was overpowered by emotions at the very moment the Germans reached the Channel coast only several miles away from Dover. Moreover, Poland had been invaded and the Russo-German pact was signed in August 1939. He believed Hitler to be

[84] Russell, Bertrand. "Reflections on My Eightieth Birthday" in: *Portraits from Memory and Other Essays*. pp. 55.
[85] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume II, 1914-1944.* pp. 191.

much worse than the Kaiser and a victory for Germany would be far more devastating now than in 1914. For Russell, all the difference lay between domination on the one hand and defeat and destruction on the other. He could by no means refrain from resistance when the existence of England was endangered.

Russell's change of heart was intuitive rather than rational. He changed his mind mainly for emotional reasons; utilitarianism did not provide a full solution. Historian Martin Ceadel argues how Russell at this point realized the humanitarian and spiritual nature of pacifism and that he rejected his rational and utilitarian approach.[86] In *Which Way to Peace?*, Russell had approached the issue of war with his traditional utilitarian strategy of weighing the pros and cons. Alan Ryan claims that the argument in the book was

> 'as ever, the application of Russell's brand of utilitarianism, where 'civilization' rather than 'happiness' is the supreme goal, and 'civilization' embraces the search for knowledge, the cultivation of passionate relationships, the development of art, music and literature. To these everything else is instrumental.'[87]

The ease with which Russell accustomed to new situations shows the extent to which his attitude towards war was based on the circumstances and empirical facts. It should be noted, however, that his rational approach was often incompatible with his personal emotions. He now realized how applying calculated arguments to the issue of war and peace had been lacking 'spiritual depth' and had become 'unconsciously insincere'.[88] This was an emotional change comparable to his first conversion in 1901 regarding the Boer War: a discovery that his framework of rational ethics could not be universally applied. According to Ceadel, Russell now also regretted his radical utilitarian stance in the first war. His utilitarianism had

[86] Ceadel, Martin. *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945. The Defining of A Faith.* Oxford University Press, New York, 1980. pp. 218-19.
[87] Ryan, Alan. *Bertrand Russell. A Political Life.* pp. 145.
[88] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume II, 1914-1944.* pp. 191.

been a façade behind which he hid his 'unconscious dependence on the same aversion to pain which had explicitly moved Nichols and Joad.'[89] Although he never abandoned his view that the Great War was unnecessary, he thought it would have been better if he had also considered the more emotional perspectives. The justifications of war could not simply be the outcome of a calculation. This opinion was the consequence of personal growth and accumulated insights, similar to his intuitive conversion of 1901. In practice, however, this change had fewer consequences than during the Boer War. Alan rightly observes how Russell was predominantly ashamed of underestimating the Nazi threat. Although Russell's approach had become more humanitarian, he did not completely renounce utilitarianism and he continued to analyze every war as such.

His biographer and contemporary Alan Wood (1957) argues that Russell's 'misinterpretation' in the thirties was based on two technical aspects. Firstly, similarly to how he underestimated the warlike spirit among the masses in 1914, he did not realize in 1939 how extreme and ruthless the Nazis could turn out. Whereas Wood is inclined to subscribe this to 'a fundamentally false view of human nature', it would be better to consider it an understandable misconception, since few were able to predict the violent nature of the Nazis. For a short while, the situation in the thirties indeed looked similar to 1914. Russell told fellow scholar Gilbert Murray (1866-1957) on 3 May 1937: 'having remained a pacifist while the Germans were invading France and Belgium in 1914, I do not see why I should cease to be one if they do it again.'[90] Also, although he often foresaw many unpredictable developments, he did not realize the impact of modern techniques on totalitarianism. Secondly, Wood argues, he over-estimated the importance of the distribution of poison gas by air. He rightly admits, however, that had nuclear power been developed only a few years earlier, Russell's fears would have been

[89] British intellectuals Beverly Nichols (1898-1983) and Cyril Joad (1891-1953) advocated a pacifism based on humanitarian inspirations and strong emotions regarding pain and human suffering. Ceadel, Martin. *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945. The Defining of A Faith.* pp. 218-19.
[90] Quoted in: Ibid. pp. 218.

understatements.[91] Ceadel adds a third aspect: the overly pessimistic view of how liberties would be severely violated in even a victorious war. In other words, his assumption that fighting the Nazis would mean that the Allies would become exactly like them and that 'if we beat them, we shall produce in time someone as much worse than Hitler as he is worse than the Kaiser.'[92] Russell's reasoning was oversimplified and based upon too optimistic a view of international politics, which was much more fanatical and violently ideological than he anticipated. In his satirical obituary he admitted that his 'mathematical studies had caused him to take a wrongly quantitative view which ignored the question of principle involved'.[93] In theory, however, it may have been possible for Russell to maintain a calculating approach to the war if the Nazis were not as ruthless and inhumane as they turned out. Modernity not only brought capitalism and rivalry but also ideological and totalitarian politics.

Two prominent falsities about his changed attitude towards war are present. The first one is the belief that Russell's change was a sudden one. Russell himself claimed that his change in opinion was not a revolution but rather a gradual process and a shift in emphasis between 1932 until 1940. This shift is only visible, however, when studying him more closely. His doubts and fears about the Nazis constantly tortured his conscience in the interwar years, but he did not express them explicitly. After discussing his doubts in private with his publisher Stanley Unwin, a brief statement on his views was published in the *New York Times* for the first time in June 1940. It was not until February 1941 that the same newspaper published a longer declaration wherein Russell publicly and explicitly renounced his pacifism. His dilemma had gradually increased over the years, until there was no other solution than to advocate a violent reply to Germany. The second misconception is that the change was inconsistent with his

[91] Alan Wood was personally acquainted with Russell and died shortly after he published the biography. Russell mentioned in his autobiography that Wood had not always assessed his political attitude accurately. Wood, Alan. *Bertrand Russell: The Passionate Sceptic.* George Allen & Unwin, London, 1957. pp. 186.
[92] Russell to Gilbert Murray on 3 March 1937. Quoted in: Ceadel, Martin. *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945. The Defining of A Faith.* pp. 217.
[93] Russell, Bertrand. "Obituary" in: *Unpopular Essays.* George Allen & Unwin, London, 1950. pp. 222.

former pacifism. Russell's change of opinion was in all respects consistent with his attitude towards war ever since the turn of the century. Still, his conversion in 1940 raised much criticism. Alan Wood rightly states that this criticism is unjust:

> 'One of the commonest charges of inconsistency against Russell is that he opposed the First World War but supported the Second. There is no doubt whatever that, in this case, his critics are wrong. Russell was quite entitled to say that being conquered by Hitler was worse than a war, because Russell never said that a war was morally wrong under all circumstances. His opposition was not a matter of principle.'[94]

Russell, despite his efforts to find a consistent approach to war, never considered it possible to condemn war altogether on either moral or on rational grounds. War in the modern age had become more objectionable than ever before, but in the highly exceptional circumstance of Hitler's expansion, evil had to be fought.

2.2 Public Opinion: Back into Mainstream Thought?

Russell's position in the thirties was not as unpopular as it had been between 1914 and 1918. Historian Alan Ryan states that Russell's writings were very much in line with contemporary thinking. *Which Way to Peace?* was similar to the popular journalistic writings at the time and it required the least defense of all his books. The support of absolute pacifism was wide-spread after the destruction of the Great War. While the Fascists in Germany and Italy increasingly glorified war, other countries explicitly denounced it. *Which Way to Peace?* was widely read and appreciated by his surroundings.[95] As Ryan describes: 'Public opinion lurched from a desire to 'hang the Kaiser' in 1918 to the feeling that Versailles had been too hard on the Germans and that Hitler ought to be conciliated rather than stamped

[94] Wood, Alan. *Bertrand Russell: Passionate Sceptic*. pp. 97.
[95] Ryan, Alan. *Bertrand Russell. A Political Life*. pp. 145.

on.'[96] Russell admitted that he did find it somewhat ironic how the tide had turned and that his pacifist views were suddenly popular.

His pacifism in the thirties still showed some cracks. Wood observes how Russell was perhaps a much better political commentator when he was alone instead of in a crowd. In other words, he would have been more objective and sharp in expressing unpopular views than in pursuing popular convictions. *Which Way to Peace?*, in Wood's opinion, shows therefore some signs of inner struggle between his pacifism and his realism. Russell wrote for instance: 'I have long been myself in genuine doubt as to the right policy'.[97] His doubts and dilemma's were, however, merely the consequences of the circumstances. He was by no means a man likely to be influenced by public opinion, although he oftentimes did feel more hopeful when he was in line with the masses. The most logical explanation for the discrepancy between his pacifism and realism is Russell's rational approach. His pacifism in *Which Way to Peace?* was a calculated policy based on the circumstances, and once the just cause was determined, he completely dedicated himself to it. Another reason is the fact that there was no possible middle road. Radical circumstances demanded radical decisions: men were either to fight or not to fight. Therefore, when Russell changed his mind, he changed his mind completely.

He remained preoccupied with psychology. His book *Power* (1938) gave a sociological analysis of the relation between the individual, power and authorities. It addresses typical interwar themes such as the role of public opinion in undermining or supporting power, the characteristics of modern large organizations and the (ethical) limitations on power. He explained how history repeats itself in different forms. His view of human nature was slightly, but not fundamentally, altered after the war. He still blamed politicians rather than the public, however, he was intrigued by the question of how public opinion and ideas were valuable to governments and how indoctrination and persecution could strengthen the totalitarian states. Alan Ryan rightly notices the similarities between *Principles of Social*

[96] Ibid. pp. 147.
[97] Russell, Bertrand. *Which Way to Peace?* pp. 15.

Reconstruction (1916) and what is said in *Power*: the problem of conflicting interests of nation states and the conflicting desires of individuals, both of which will lead to destruction if they were to be pursued at all costs.[98]

In America, Russell had an ambiguous stance with the public, albeit mostly because of his agnosticism and his progressive perspectives on sexuality expressed in books like *Marriage and Morals* (1929) and other practical works. He had several disappointing incidents with boards of the universities where he taught. Among his pacifist friends, his radical change of thought had caused criticism. They were disappointed by his conversion. Russell once more explained that he had never claimed that war was inherently wrong and that the circumstances demanded a different approach. In his declaration in the *New York Times* he stated that he had not been the only person having misread the situation: prime minister Joseph Chamberlain and ambassadors Lord Lothian and Lord Halifax had done so as well. His critics also observed, however, that Russell was not the person to hide a change of thought and that he was perfectly able to do so. When he returned to England after the war, Russell found himself in the mainstream. His opinions and emotions were compatible with those of the cheerful crowds. The BBC invited Russell to express his opinions on post-war international relations. Two years after the war he wrote to a friend: 'I am incredibly busy as the B.B.C. has developed a passion for me.'[99] It seemed as if the old philosopher was discovered by the establishment as a distinguished political commentator. The sudden attention and appreciation for his views was surprising but comfortable for Russell.

2.3 Action: Nuance and Individualism

Although he clung to his pacifist outlook during the interwar period, Russell's actions lacked the radical and rebellious stance of the years during the first war. The circumstances were more complicated; the difference between right and wrong was not as sharply separated as in

[98] Ryan, Alan. *Bertrand Russell. A Political Life.* pp. 154.
[99] Russell to Irina Wragge-Morley, 23 January 1947. Private source in Clark, Ronald. *The Life of Bertrand Russell.* pp. 496.

the First World War. The rise of ideological politics in Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union was a new phenomenon to everyone. In the early thirties, Russell and his third wife Peter Spence worked together to help political refugees from Germany and the Soviet Union.[100] There was little that could be done, but to passively await and watch the political tensions grow was no option. Russell took his time to assess the international developments carefully. He articulated his conclusion in *Which Way to Peace?* (1936), in which he advocated individual pacifism. This implied that every person individually should persuade others to denounce the coming war. His approach was quite practical and not unrealistic. Many people were now advocating non-resistance and the message that was to be spread was clear:

> 'To abstain from fighting, and from all voluntary participation in war between civilised states; to use every effort to persuade others to do likewise; to bring all possible influence to bear to prevent the participation of this country in war; and within the limits of his capacity, to aim at similar results in other countries also.'[101]

The only thing pacifists had to do was to 'make public opinion more skeptical of the value of war and armaments, to stimulate resistance to increases in the armed forces, and to make it clear that, in the event of war, the Government will have to face a large amount of passive resistance.'[102] As he did in the first war, Russell appealed to common sense and humanity. By stressing the advantages of peace and freedom, people would realize the futility of war. He argued that the pacifists had three opponents to overcome: the advocates of war at home and abroad, the Marxists and the Communists who considered war necessary for change and the people advocating aggressive solutions such as armaments and alliances.[103] Although he later regretted his pacifism, it was by no means as radical as in 1914. The most striking difference with his attitude in the first war was his

[100] Her real name was Marjorie which she legally changed to Patricia and she preferred to be called Peter.
[101] Russell, Bertrand. *Which Way to Peace?* pp. 223.
[102] Ibid. pp. 219.
[103] Ibid. pp. 195-96.

reluctance to join organizations. Although he had had considerable difficulties with the UDC and the NCF, he did not refrain from actively participating and cooperating within those organizations. Several aspects can explain this difference. Firstly, pacifism was a widespread and popular conviction in the twenties and thirties. In 1914, Russell had found himself among a small minority which was forced to cooperate in order to effectively spread their propaganda. Now that many people had similar views, the individual pacifism advocated in *Which Way to Peace?* was sufficient to strengthen their cause. Another important explanation is the fact that Russell was weary of the political polarization in the interwar period. The postwar years saw an immense increase in political cooperation, a development Russell was skeptical of. Consequently, he merely advocated an *individual* pacifism rather than organized action. A third explanation is the general pacifist dilemma in the 1930s. After *Which Way to Peace?* was published, Russell joined the Peace Pledge Union. Initiated by reverend H.R.L. Sheppard (1880-1937), the organization attempted to articulate their pacifist cause by distributing a magazine called *Peace News* together with pamphlets, leaflets and films.[104] The fact that Russell was little more than a passive sponsor of the PPU indicates his difficulties with absolute pacifism. The tension between non-resistance and the rise of totalitarianism in the thirties was palpable for him. He supported the pacifist cause, but only after he articulated his exact views in *Which Way to Peace?* and not in a manner comparable to 1914. Why was Russell not expressing his pacifist views in the radical and apocalyptic terms he had hitherto pronounced? The main difference was that the first war was new, while the second war was a consequence of the first. Russell vigorously rebelled against the first war because it destroyed the peace and stability of the decades prior to 1914. Even though the war was over, the world after 1918 was all but perfect. The peace was already ruined, and now the Allies were to pick up the pieces. His hopes had shifted from the desire to return to Victorian times to making the best

[104] Lukowitz, David. "British Pacifists and Appeasement: The Peace Pledge Union" in: *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 9, No. 1, January 1974. pp. 117-18.

of the situation. Instead of recreating utopia, Russell now sought to limit suffering.

Russell and his children fled to the United States in 1938. He remained, however, remarkably loyal to his native country. After he had made up his mind that the war must be fought in 1940, he claimed that he was more than willing to fight if he would have been younger; Russell was almost seventy years old. He found out that there was little he could contribute: 'The Allies do not need men, still less old men: they need machines.'[105] His willingness to provide the government with anything that might be helpful was somewhat ironic considering his fierce rebellion against the government in the first war. Now that he thought that British victory was necessary for the survival of civilization, he would do anything in order to achieve that goal. He stated: 'I don't think anything so important has happened since the fifth century, the previous occasion on which the German's reduced the world to barbarism.'[106] Being away from home, Russell remained very much connected with Britain and the war. One of his graduate students stated: 'we and Russell spent more time listening to the radio broadcasts about the war in Europe than we did to discussing Hume, Russell and Carnap.'[107] He felt somewhat isolated and in the words of his biographer Ronald Clark he was 'a homesick patriot' displaced across the Atlantic.[108] His love for Britain had grown, if possible, even greater. In the spring of 1941 he asked Lord Halifax, the British ambassador to the United States, whether Britons in America could be of any help in their native country: 'Many desire very strongly to be in England, but are in doubt whether they are wanted, and as to whether an extra mouth to feed would outweigh their possible usefulness. They would be very grateful for a simple statement as to whether or not their return would be likely to be

[105] Quoted in: Moorehead, Caroline. *Bertrand Russell. A Life.* pp. 429.
[106] Russell here refers to the expansion of German tribes leading the European continent into the Dark Age after the fall of the Roman Empire around 476 AD. A letter to Robert Trevelyan 19 May 1940, Russell Archives. Quoted in: Clark, Ronald. *The Life of Bertrand Russell.* pp. 467.
[107] Alvin Hunter about Russell, November 1974. Quoted in: Ibid. pp. 466.
[108] Clark, Ronald. *The Life of Bertrand Russell.* pp. 467.

advantageous to their country or the reverse.'[109] The answer remained ambiguous: Halifax replied that it depended. Being away from Britain was very difficult for Russell, those years abroad were the hardest of his life. When he returned in 1944, he was seventy-two. He was delighted to be back and despite his age, he was as determined as always to devote his time to the betterment of the world. His first postwar public actions were the result of his unaffected skepticism towards Stalin. Soviet achievements in the war were highly admirable, but that did not change the fact that the dictator was barbarous to Russell.

2.4 Politics: Apolitical Realism

His relation with his own government was never so problematic as it was during the First World War. The pacifism pronounced in *Which Way to Peace?* was a passive and individual one; it was merely supposed to show the government the sentiments of the public. The appeasement policy of the Churchill government was, however regretful perhaps in retrospect, completely in line with Russell's view. In this period he was less inclined to align himself with a political party. Like he had been anything but prominent in the Peace Pledge Union, he was not at the front of the Labour Party either. According to historian Philip Ironside was Russell's more nuanced attitude in the thirties the result of his distance to politics. Whereas in 1914 he was closely tied to the ruling elite, he now felt alienated from the political organizations and associations founded after the war.[110] This claim seems to be accurate since Russell himself explained that pacifism was in his view purely a practical stance, not a dogmatic and rigid theory. Pacifism had to oppose the fanaticism of desiring membership to a particular group. In 1936, the Conservative Party was part of the pacifist policy. Russell observed that they disliked Germany as much as they disliked the Soviet Union and that they were very aware of the implications a next war would have. The pacifist cause should,

[109] Russell to Lord Halifax on 10 May 1941, Russell Archives. Quoted in: Ibid. pp. 480.
[110] Ironside, Philip. *The Social and Political Thought of Bertrand Russell. The Development of an Aristocratic Liberalism.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996. pp. 185.

however, by no means be confined to a political party. He stressed that pacifism was to explain how the fanatics of Fascism and Communism pursue one cause at the expense of others and that 'politics has replaced theology as the field for intolerance.'[111] He argued that peace was a universal interest and that this must be repeatedly expressed internationally. Russell noticed the increasing contrast between the warlike spirits in Germany and Italy and the pacifist tendencies in other countries. In practical terms this meant that America should support neutrality and nations such as France must refrain from creating alliances with the Soviet Union.

The Russo-German pact was another acknowledgement of Soviet misbehavior, he stated in a letter how 'the Bolsheviks have at last shown themselves to all the world the monsters that I felt them to be in 1920.'[112] During the war, Russell's anti-communism remained appropriately silent. After the war was over he could not deny that the Soviet Union had been essential for the Allied victory. In a letter to Beatrice Webb (1858-1943), Russell wrote: 'whether one likes the regime or not, one can't help immensely admiring the Russian achievements in the war.'[113] With this said, he immediately urged that the shrewd Russians should be contained and scrutinized. It was a message Britain was ready to hear: despite the achievements of the Red Army, Stalin must be brought into line.

His attitude towards America's role shifted from demanding strict neutrality to advocating active participation in 1940. Where he had so radically expressed his objections towards America's entry in the first war, he now wanted nothing more than America's involvement, preferably through Japan. A British MP stated after meeting Russell in New York in 1941: '[His] old pacifism is completely gone (…) [he] is quite reconciled to the view that any world order must be imposed by force and rest on force as its final

[111] Russell, Bertrand. *Which Way to Peace?* pp. 198-201.
[112] Russell in a letter to Lucy Silcox, 22 December 1939, Trinity College Library. Quoted in: Clark, Ronald. *The Life of Bertrand Russell.* pp. 466.
[113] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume II, 1914-1944.* pp. 257.

sanction.'[114] The Second World War, the second wave of destruction, proved that there was officially no return to nineteenth century peace, progress and stability.

The interwar period had made Russell more aware of the danger of ideological politics. He tended to consider it the pursuit of some sort of religion. In *Power* he argued how 'a creed or sentiment of some kind is essential to social cohesion, but if it is to be a source of strength it must be genuinely and deeply felt by the great majority of the population.'[115] In other words, it must never be forced upon by governments through censorship and persecution as it was the case with Fascist and Communist governments. The perfect situation would be a to have in society a balance between skepticism and dogmatism. 'Freedom' was still a keyword to him. Similarly to the First World War his socialism had little to do with economics but rather with freedom from war and imperialism. During this period, however, Russell's anarchist tendencies were abiding as a result of his somewhat more pessimistic view of human nature. Although the war had several consequences for his political views, he would not explicitly renounce some of his previous assumptions until after 1948. The postwar world first demanded clear views on international relations, in particular the reconstructing of the world.

2.5 Peace: Reconstructing the World

In 1935, it was officially clear to Russell that the League of Nations lacked efficiency. If the League had been stronger, he would have advocated sanctions in the Abyssinian conflict: 'either the threat would suffice or the war would be short and small. The whole question is quantitative.'[116] The main problem was that the League was no government and that it lacked the legitimacy to enforce its legislation by force.

In *Which Way to Peace?* he optimistically argued how permanent peace was still among the possibilities. The obstacles for

[114] Brown, W.J. *I Meet America*. pp. 116. Quoted in: Clark, Ronald. *The Life of Bertrand Russell.* pp. 468.
[115] Russell, Bertrand. *Power: A New Social Analysis.* George Allen & Unwin, London, 1938. pp. 159.
[116] Ceadel, Martin. *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945.* pp. 182.

peace were in his view political, economic and psychological. The means to achieve permanent peace was through a world government which compelled obedience and possessed the means to enforce international law, which maintained the monopoly in modern and dangerous weapons. Russell vividly imagined how the citizens of the 'World State' would travel freely and how xenophobia, nationalism and discrimination would disappear.[117] By attributing his ideal world power with the right to oppose its policy on nations by violent means, Russell annoyed many absolute pacifists. He considered a powerful world government necessary to make passions such as nationalism, better explained as the hate of others and the feeling of being a superior nation, obsolete. Men had to reject what differentiates them and instead consider what they had in common: humanity. Although his ideal remained rather abstract, the postwar world seemed willing to hear his proposals. Many were convinced that serious measures had to be taken in order to protect the world from future wars. In practice, however, they would again not be far-reaching enough for Russell.

His idea of world government was shaped by the situations. After the First World War he thought that the distribution of wealth was important in world government and that capitalism had been an important cause of the war. By regulating economic affairs through a supranational power, much of the rivalry and tension would be removed. The interwar period also showed how ideological politics and utopian desires to reconstruct the world influenced international relations. In 1945 Russell realized that things were even more complicated as the result of the behavior of an old opponent: the Soviet Union.

2.6 Conclusions

The interwar period was confusing even for an old rationalistic philosopher with the talent of foresight. The period of the Second World War again shows how Russell adjusted his attitude to the circumstances. He became intrigued with the relation between the individual and power. The rise of totalitarian regimes made him increasingly averse to organization. He had always been urging the

[117] Russell, Bertrand. *Which Way to Peace?* pp. 177-79.

public to be skeptical but now it seemed as if the masses in Germany, Russia and Italy were hypnotized. Even though he realized that another war was almost inevitable, the idea of a new war was horrifying to him. He envisioned civilization destroyed by air warfare, use of gas and modern bombs. By assuming that German motives for war were identical to 1914, Russell thought that a similar policy of non-resistance would undermine the German desire of national pride. The government, the intelligentsia and public opinion were in line with Russell's thought. Unfortunately, the Nazis turned out more ruthless than anticipated and this put his believe in non-resistance to the test. He emotionally broke down as the Nazis came closer to Britain and when defeat seemed more probable. After 1940 he supported the war with all his heart, Hitler had to be fought. Overall, Russell became more moderate as the situation around him became more radical. All he could do was to urge for common sense and individual rationalism. His attitude in the Second World War would seem even more humble compared to his radical battles against brinkmanship in the decades to come.

III CATASTROPHE OR CIVILIZATION: 1945-1970

In 1945, Russell was seventy-three. For the next quarter of a century, however, he would prove as active as he was during the First World War. The end of the Second World War did not make him feel more at ease with the world, on the contrary. A month after Hiroshima, Russell felt extremely pessimistic about the future of civilization. With the development of nuclear warfare, for the first time in history, the extinction of the human species became a serious probability. He felt that there would surely be another world war, and admitted to a friend that he never 'felt the outlook as gloomy as now'.[118] He expressed his worries to the masses and found that they often contradicted public opinion. People in England did not share his concerns and Russell was annoyed by their indifference. He remained critical of the Soviets but also grew increasingly hostile to the United States. Despite the radical and sometimes confusing viewpoints Russell adopted during these years, his perspectives would prove rather similar to what he had advocated in the past four decades.

3.1 Ethics: Battling Brinkmanship

From 1945 until 1970 Russell's ethics of war were occasionally subject to considerable change. Immediately after the war, he was extremely fearful of Stalin's Russia. Affected by the horrors to which the 1930s politics of appeasement had led, he advocated a preventive war. To Albert Einstein (1879-1955) he admitted how his old pacifism had caused him to feel more warlike after 1945: 'I favoured appeasement before 1939, wrongly, as I now think; I do not want to repeat the same mistake.'[119] He did not favor armament against Hitler but he did advocate an active stance towards Stalin mostly because of

[118] Quoted in: Moorehead, Caroline. *Bertrand Russell. A Life.* pp. 467.
[119] Russell to Einstein, 24 November 1947, Russell Archives. Quoted in: Clark, Ronald. *The Life of Bertrand Russell*. pp. 522.

this experience. Russell now argued, as he was still a consequentialist, that even the destruction of a nuclear war could be outweighed by a good outcome. In October 1945 he said: 'I should, for my part, prefer all the chaos and destruction of a war conducted by means of the atomic bomb to the universal domination of a government having the evil characteristics of the Nazis.'[120] In the immediate aftermath of the war, he hoped that America would show enough strength to contain the Soviets. It was, as he observed, very important to create a safe place for atomic energy and it was best kept at either an international institution or the United States. The one obstacle to overcome was to get the Soviet Union to agree. The Baruch Plan, as it was first suggested by the United States and the United Nations in June 1946, was to ensure control and safety of nuclear weapons on an international level. This was done by sharing the scientific information among all nations, while inspections by the International Atomic Development Authority and the prohibition of producing such weapons were to safeguard the peaceful use of the information. Russell thought this was a generous proposition and argued that it had great merits for both Russia and the world as a whole. The postwar idea of international control came very close to his long held ideal of a world government and he was determined to find a way to overcome the obstacle of Soviet Russia. He was one of the few who realized that it was a crucial time. International agreements were essential to remove the threat of a nuclear war and since America still had the monopoly, it was a matter of now or never. Stalin had to agree to the Baruch Proposal. When he did not, Russell consequently advocated a more aggressive policy.

Opinions differ greatly about the nature of the policy he proposed after Stalin rejected the Baruch proposal at the end of 1946. There is no doubt, however, that Russell supported a preventive war against Russia. He desired a confederation controlling atomic energy and 'if the USSR did not give way and join the confederation, after there had been time for mature consideration, the conditions for a justifiable war (…) would all be fulfilled. A *casus belli* would not be

[120] Russell, Bertrand. "Humanity's Last Chance" in: *Cavalcade*, 20 October 1945. Quoted in: Clark, Ronald. *The Life of Bertrand Russell*. pp. 520.

difficult to find.'[121] In reality there was little chance the Soviets would give in, on the contrary, their policy would become more rigid. Before the Soviet rejection of Baruch, however, it was generally still hoped for that they might cooperate. Only when they declined at the end of 1946 did a preventive war become more probable. Since there was no time to lose -Stalin was already speeding up the process of atomic development- a clear and determined international stance was needed. In practice this meant that countries needed to cooperate and create a powerful counter-alliance. If Russia would turn out unwilling to join this alliance the threat of war would probably make them acquiesce. If not, the world might survive the war and be led into a world government.[122] As usual, Russell's views were the consequence of the circumstances, and in the years 1945-1948, circumstances changed quickly. In his article "Bertrand Russell and Preventive War" professor of philosophy Ray Perkins argues that his views were mainly an assessment of three different options if the Soviets would continue their current aggressive policy: war with Russia before it develops the atomic bomb; war with Russia after it developed the atomic bomb; or submission.[123] The latter was most unthinkable for Russell. To allow the Russians to dominate and expand was not a reasonable option. In his traditional utilitarian manner, he assessed the causes and the means. As long as the Soviet Union did not have an atom bomb, the Western countries were able to exert their influence. His fierce skepticism and hostility towards Russia was remarkable. He was not by any means affected by the extenuating circumstance that the Red Army had defeated the Nazis; they remained just as bad in his view.

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[121] Idem.

[122] Russell on "The International Bearings of Atomic Warfare" at the Royal Empire Society. 3 December 1947, printed in *United Empire*, vol. 39, January 1948, pp. 18-21. Quoted in: Clark, Ronald. *The Life of Bertrand Russell*. pp. 522.

[123] It should be noted that Russell also predicted the actual outcome: a relatively peaceful coexistence in a balance of power. However a peaceful solution, America giving up its sovereignty was a difficult compromise for Russell. (Cavalcade article of 20 October 1945). Perkins, Ray. "Bertrand Russell and Preventive War" in: Schwerin, Alan (ed.) *Bertrand Russell on Nuclear War, Peace and Language.* Praeger Publishers,Westport, 2002. pp. 7.

Somewhat unexpectedly, the press was very critical of his views. The conditional aspect in Russell's arguments, namely the Soviet Union's behavior, was often ignored. After hostile reports in the press, he explained in 1948:

> 'I did not, as has been reported, urge immediate war with Russia. I did urge that the democracies should be prepared to use force if necessary, and that their readiness to do so should be made perfectly clear to Russia [which] can be halted in their attempts to dominate Europe and Asia only by determined and combined resistance by every means in the democracies' power –not excluding military means, if Russia continues to refuse all compromise.'[124]

The word 'if' was particularly important, especially since Russia's behavior was rather unpredictable at the time. In general, he urged for people to seriously realize the threat of Russia, and to be prepared to defend themselves for the sake of world peace and humanity. In more abstract terms he desired an active aggressive stance, and in practice this meant a suitable reaction to Russia's behavior: whatever would prove necessary in order to protect world peace. To await passively reminded him too much of the politics of appeasement during the Nazi expansion. The initiatives of the United Nations and America came so close to his ideal that he was reluctant to let it slip away. The cause was to be justified by almost any means.

The most confusing aspect of Russell's stance with preventive war is his own account of his attitude. When he received much critique, Russell first denied his advocacy of an aggressive foreign policy, later he apologized for it. In his autobiography Russell played down the controversy by stating that he did not expect his impulsive advice to be heard or considered, and that he consequently forgot that he had given such advice. He admitted, nevertheless, that he should never have denied his words.[125] He also claimed that he did not

[124] Russell, Bertrand. "Resisting Russia" in: *The Observer,* Vol. 3, 28 November 1948. Quoted in: Perkins, Ray. "Bertrand Russell and Preventive War" in: Schwerin, Alan (ed.) *Bertrand Russell on Nuclear War, Peace and Language.* Praeger Publishers, Westport, 2002. pp. 12.
[125] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume III, 1944*

advocate an aggressive policy until the Baruch Plan was turned down, even though he had advocated it since 1945. What is important, however, is that his ideas were, despite their controversy, completely compatible with his stance in the First World War and the Second World War: it was the outcome of the causes versus the means, the result of the situations at that particular moment.

Perkins rightly argues that Russell's views underwent modification in 1948. After the Baruch Plan was turned down and the European continent became divided in East and West, Russell abandoned his expectation that Stalin would acquiesce to threat. From 1948 onwards he gradually abandoned his proposals for preventive war. In 1949 Russia developed its own nuclear bomb and Russell became more aware of the possible implications of nuclear weapons. He started to imagine the consequences of such a war, provoking a serious concern. The idea of mutual destruction was horrifying to him. It led to an even more gloomy outlook than what he had articulated in *Which Way to Peace?* It was not until Stalin died in 1953 and the process of de-Stalinization started that Russell abandoned the idea that the Soviet Union was pursuing world domination. In "Why I am Not a Communist" (1956) Russell said:

> 'The way to combat Communism is not war. What is needed (…) is a diminution of the grounds for discontent in the less prosperous parts of the non-Communist world (…) This ought to be dealt with by a combination of patient tact with dramatic announcements renouncing such relics of white domination as survive in Asia. Communism is a doctrine bred of poverty, hatred and strife. Its spread can only be arrested by diminishing the area of poverty and hatred.'[126]

After 1949, Russell evaluated the Cold War situation differently. His negative views of Communism and the Soviets persisted, however. For the first time since 1945, from 1956 onwards, Russell started to

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1967. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1969. pp. 14.

[126] Russell, Bertrand. "Why I am Not A Communist" in: *Portraits from Memory and Other Essays*. pp. 481.

plead for a neutral stance for Britain, however sided with America, and unilateral nuclear disarmament. While his anger towards the Soviet Union was slowly abiding, he became increasingly critical of American foreign policy from 1960 onwards. His objection towards the Vietnam War was characterized by his idea that America had become more offensive while the Soviet Union turned more defensive and benign. He saw the Cuban Missile Crisis as the result of that dangerous American offensiveness. He also believed in the rights to sovereignty for the Asian people. His argument was, however, not the typical anti-imperialist stance; his hostility towards British and American involvement in Asia had been long-standing. Independence was important, but it was brinkmanship he was most concerned with.

Until his death, Vietnam was the issue that primarily occupied him. As the war proceeded, most Americans turned against the war and their government, and Russell's voice became one in the crowd. He was, however, one of the first to reveal in the early 1960s the American intervention in Vietnam, the immorality of the war and the atrocities that were going on. For a short while, he even advocated a more offensive stance by the Soviet Union. He criticized the Russians for their timidity and argued that they should intervene on behalf of the Vietcong, and that they must cooperate with Cuba, Angola and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Whereas in the past he considered nationalism the greatest threat to world peace, he now considered it a means of answering American aggression. The Vietnam War was new evidence for Russell, whose elitist views often amazed contemporary historians, that even the assumed rational, liberal, western countries were able to behave as uncivilized barbarians. In this regard, one important aspect of Russell's ethics is at odds with his earlier opinion. Whereas he criticized the idea of the oppressed being morally superior, as the British thought themselves when fighting the Germans during the First World War, he now stated how 'the people of Vietnam are heroic, and their struggle is epic; a stirring and permanent reminder of the incredible spirit of which men are capable when they are dedicated to a noble ideal. Let us salute the people of Vietnam.'[127]

[127] Russell, Bertrand. *War Crimes in Vietnam*. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1967. pp. 99.

He now supported the suppressed fighting for independence to such an extent that he attributed them with moral superiority. As the Allies were justly fighting Hitler during the Second World War, the people in southeast Asia had every right to defend themselves. His attitude was mainly the result of his frustration with America and in order to underscore his opinions on how the Vietnamese were fighting for a just cause.

Russell's strategies for assessing international relations remained similar. Utilitarianism seems to be a strategy consistently applied by Russell. Unlike philosophy, he claimed, 'in political arguments, it is seldom necessary to appeal to ethical considerations, since enlightened self-interest affords a sufficient motive for action in accordance with the general good.'[128] Although he regretted his mathematical approach to the humanitarian dilemmas of pacifism prior to the Second World War, Russell still greatly preferred a rational approach to international relations: 'there must be a habit of viewing communities scientifically rather than passionately.'[129] According to Bart Schultz, Russell's recommendation for a pre-emptive attack on the Soviet Union shows how 'he was more than willing to urge war if the likely benefits were great enough.'[130] When he was forced by the circumstances to change his mind, he changed his mind completely. Overall, his attitude towards war remained the consequence of the circumstances and the relationship between them remained a logical one. Since the circumstances changed, Ryan argues, 'critics [who] complained of the inconsistency between his earlier advocacy of American aggressiveness towards Russia and his later defence of an extremely conciliatory policy (…) missed the target.'[131] Russell defended himself in the last chapter of his book *Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare* to the criticisms with the argument that only idiots would advocate the same policies in

[128] Russell, Bertrand. *Human Society in Ethics and Politics.* George Allen & Unwin, London, 1954. pp. 106.
[129] Ibid. pp. 233.
[130] Schultz, Bart. "Bertrand Russell in Ethics and Politics" in: *Ethics*. pp. 623.
[131] Alan, Ryan. *Bertrand Russell: A Political Life*. pp. 179.

changed situations.[132] It is obvious that his views changed considerably, but his argumentation, strategy and ethics remained similar. But regardless, many remained highly skeptical of the views this old philosopher was so fervently advocating.

3.2 Public Opinion: Praise and Appraisal

Russell in many respects found himself in the same isolated position he was in during the First World War. His fear of Russia in 1945 caused suspicion among his English leftwing friends and he was also often denounced by the Soviet press. Pacifists and non-pacifists criticized Russell's idea of a preventive war. His fierce and extremely hostile attitude towards America was considered excessive and critics often misinterpreted his motives. Alan Ryan describes how the situation was very much like the First World War: 'he held much the same anti-patriotic views which had so enraged everyone in 1914-15; his stupider critics thought he was pro-German then, and they thought he was pro-Russian now.'[133] By attacking both Russia and America simultaneously people got confused. Although Stalin was seen as a serious threat, Russell's impatient and radical attitude was not appreciated by the people who thought peace had finally come in 1945. It was primarily his political attitude during the late 1940s that caused the criticism.

What is remarkable is that Russell simultaneously gained considerable appreciation in the 1950s for his work in several fields. He gave the first BBC Reith lectures in 1948; he was awarded the Order of Merit in 1949; received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1950 and the Pears Trophy (of Pears' Cyclopedia) for his work on behalf of world peace in 1955. The media spoke very well of him. For a short while, he seemed to have ceased to be the outcast he always was: 'I have always thought respectable people scoundrels, and I look anxiously at my face every morning for signs of my becoming a scoundrel.'[134] In Britain, it was not unusual to praise older intellectuals, but in America Russell was still perceived as threat. As it

[132] Russell, Bertrand. *Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare*. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1959. pp. 90.
[133] Alan, Ryan. *Bertrand Russell. A Political Life*. pp. 188.
[134] Wood, Alan. *Bertrand Russell: The Passionate Sceptic.* pp. 233.

turned out, however, Britain had every reason to remain weary of the old philosopher.

For the third time in the twentieth century the world looked anything but promising. Still, his questions about human nature did not become more pessimistic but remained similar to his questions 1914. Russell was puzzled by the warlike spirit among the masses back then and he still was. Although the title suggests otherwise, *New Hopes for a Changing World* (1951) shows Russell's doubts about the future of mankind and human ability to preserve civilization. He questioned whether man was perhaps destined for destruction. But, similar to 1914, he refused to believe so. The fact that in the mid 1950s world politics had been reduced to the fundamental question of destruction or survival made it more probable that men were able to choose the wiser of the two options.

Opinions differ about how seriously Russell's actions should be taken in the last decade of his life. From 1960 onwards, it became increasingly unclear to which extent Russell spoke as an individual and whether his writings were really his. He worked through organizations and American activist Ralph Schoenman's[135] personal convictions became intertwined with Russell's, creating confusion among his public. He declared: 'what goes out over my name is usually composed by me. When it is not, it still presents my opinion and thought. I sign nothing –letters or more formal documents- that I have not discussed, read and approved.'[136] Ryan argues that Russell was by no means controlled by his entourage; influenced by his politically opinionated wife, or affected by his old age.[137]

He still applied psychological explanations for human behavior and despite the circumstances, hope prevailed. In the little book *Unarmed Victory,* written after the Cuba crisis, he restated his familiar expression how fear of others led to hate, and that 'hate causes belief

[135] Ralph Schoenman (1935) was an American member of the CDN and became Russell's personal secretary from the 1960s onwards. His influence on Russell's life has been evaluated differently and critically.
[136] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume III, 1944-1967*. pp. 164.
[137] Ryan, Alan. *Bertrand Russell. A Political Life.* pp. 173.

that the other side is wholly wicked and our own is wholly good.'[138] This conviction was identical with what he described in *Justice in Wartime.* Nationalism was, in some cases, a highly dangerous passion, and if only men were to realize that other nations are by no means more wicked than their own, the world would be a better place. The international situation remained worrisome, and Russell's fundamental convictions remained the same. He stuck to the believe that innocent civilians were the victims of aggressive and short-sighted governments. His hopes that circumstances would change for the better also seemed invincible. On the last page of *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* he wrote: 'the future of man is at stake, and if enough men become aware of this his future will be assured. Those who are to lead the world out of its troubles will need courage, hope and love. Whether they will prevail, I do not know; but, beyond all reason, I am unconquerably persuaded that they will.'[139]

3.3 Action: Persistent Protest

Despite his age, Russell was convinced that direct action was necessary to temper the turmoil in international relations. Alan Ryan, using one of Russell's own images, describes how he felt like 'a passer-by who sees a large adult beating a small boy with a stick; there's no point in asking how the fight started, the thing is to stop it.'[140] Meanwhile, Russell grew angrier and more impatient as he got older. He did not believe in long-term solutions and was very active between 1954 and 1964. Ryan rightly argues that his active attitude in these decades is comparable to Russell's behavior during the First World War. His articles and lectures were very much like the ones stemming from the years 1914-1918: they were often angry and hastily written. He expressed his opinions to whoever was willing to hear. As he had urged people to cling to individual pacifism in 1936, he now urged for

[138] Russell, Bertrand. *Unarmed Victory.* Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1963. pp. 117.
[139] Russell, Bertrand. *Human Society in Ethics and Politics.* pp. 239.
[140] Ryan, Alan. *Bertrand Russell. A Political Life*. pp. 203. Ryan obtained this information from Katherine Tait, Russell's daughter.

> 'all those who value not only art and science but a sufficiency of daily bread and freedom from the fear that a careless word by their children to a schoolteacher may condemn them to forced labour in a Siberian wilderness, must do whatever lies in their power to preserve in their own countries a less servile and more prosperous manner of life.'[141]

But unlike the First and Second World Wars, Russell was now more prepared to align himself with political organizations and initiatives. As the postwar situation became more clear in the 1950s, even though he had not worked in isolation in the 1940s, he started to undertake more organized action. He participated in the popular habit of emphasizing the imminence of an accidental nuclear war. In 1954, he gave one of his most passionate broadcasts for the BBC entitled "Man's Peril". It was characterized by the same passionate appeal to humanity he had made with "The Free Man's Worship" fifty-one years earlier. It ended with the warning:

> 'There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge, and wisdom. Shall we, instead, choose death, because we cannot forget our quarrels? I appeal, as a human being to human beings: remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, nothing lies before you but universal death.'[142]

Russell once more urged for people to consider mankind as a unity, and for them to realize the humility of human beings in the history of the world, because 'man, as time counts in geology and in the history of evolution, is a very recent arrival in his planet.'[143] The speech was influential and he received positive reactions from different people. A

[141] Russell, Bertrand. "Why I am Not A Communist" in: *Portraits from Memory and Other Essays*. pp.213.
[142] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume III, 1944-1967*. pp. 72.
[143] Russell, Bertrand. *Human Society in Ethics and Politics.* George Allen & Unwin, London, 1954. pp. 235.

year later, Russell had found an ally in Einstein. The two men together created a manifesto favoring nuclear disarmament, which other scholars, scientists and intellectuals were meant to sign. Russell drafted the statement and sent it to Einstein at Princeton to sign it. Then, in the midst of their correspondence, Einstein died. While anticipating that the manifesto had to go without his support, he found the returned letter with his signature waiting for him at his hotel room in Paris. The Russell-Einstein Manifesto was signed by eleven prominent intellectuals and issued on a conference in London in July 1955. Russell opened the conference by stating: 'I am bringing the warning pronounced by the signatories to the notice of all powerful governments of the world in the earnest hope that they may agree to allow their citizens to survive.'[144]

The manifesto led to the first Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs in 1957.[145] In an informal environment the gathering of scientists were debating the most essential dilemma's in international relations, leading to the creation of the Pugwash movement. Russell believed that the scientific community might be able to link East and West and contribute to awareness among politicians and the masses. Pugwash was the first time that he could actually put this believe in practice: during the First World War his attempts to persuade intellectuals to undertake action were in vain, during the Second World War there was no opportunity for intellectuals to support the fight against the Nazis. After he helped establish the movement, Russell's contributions were relatively moderate. By December of the same year it had become clear how Russell was unsuited to work in the more nuanced modes of political activity the Pugwash movement acquired as it had become a respectable and integrated part of world affairs. He remained, however, very loyal to the organization. Russell's biographer Ray Monk observes an attitude that seems similar to the periods surrounding the previous two wars:

[144] Quoted in: Krieger, David. "After Fifty Years, Do We Remember Our Humanity?" in: *Humanist*. July-August 2005. pp. 25.
[145] Pugwash is still internationally active today and derives its name from the town of Pugwash on Nova Scotia.

> 'He longed for something more direct, more dramatic, something that would, like "Man's Peril" and the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, hit the headlines. Moreover, he wanted the general public, and the leaders of the world, to listen, not only to good sense and reason, but to *him*, Bertrand Russell.'[146]

His dramatic, apocalyptic attitude was very much like the First World War. Back then, neither the UDC nor the NCF fulfilled his expectations of what the pacifist cause could achieve. Now it seemed to be the other way around, because the Pugwash movement had become so effective that there was little for Russell to contribute to its progress. During the Cold War he continued to function as an individualist. Although he seldom showed great appreciation for others, he developed admiration for the Polish physicist Joseph Rotblad (1908-2005).[147] When he decided that he wanted to proceed persuading governments and peoples to banish war, he stopped taking part in the Pushwash movement. He thereafter briefly presided over the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1958, which was created in order to protest against nuclear weapons and to urge the British government to disarm unilaterally. It was purely a British organization with many sponsors and prominent members. Russell regretted that the CND was primarily identified with the Labour Party. He himself was in many respects a pragmatic realist, whereas other pacifists often stressed the virtues of pacifism and pursued ideals that where too dogmatic.

The 1960s showed a rebellious Russell. On 24 September 1960 he addressed a crowd at Trafalgar Square proposing a mass-movement of civil disobedience. The CND was not amused since they did not want to be identified with such a policy: it was very likely to negatively influence the outcome of the Labour Conference. Russell consequently limited his tasks and role within the CND as he found

[146] Monk, Ray. *Bertrand Russell: the Ghost of Madness 1921-1970.* Jonathan Cape, London, 2000. pp. 380.
[147] Rotblad was signatory of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, secretary general of the Pugwash movement and he won the Nobel Peace Price in 1995 for his work towards nuclear disarmament.

that it had 'reached the limit of [its] effectiveness'.[148] Together with reverend Michael Scott he founded the Committee of 100. One hundred people were to sign a declaration stating their willingness to commit minor offences in order to protest Britain's possession of nuclear weapons. His attraction to civil disobedience was understandable: he had always found that civilians should not be obliged to follow their governments' foreign policy. Civil disobedience was a 'method of causing people to know the perils to which the world is exposed and in persuading them to join us in opposing the insanity which affects, at present, many of the most powerful Governments in the world.'[149] Many were puzzled when he resorted to civil disobedience, but he was convinced that persistent fanaticism would gain public attention, especially since, in Russell's eyes, the media proved weak and compliant at that time. He organized a 'sit-down' campaign on 6 August (the day the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima) in Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square in London to protest and plead disarmament. Russell, age eighty-eight, was arrested and spent a week in Brixton prison, where he had been forty-three years earlier. History had repeated itself very explicitly.

In 1963, Russell resigned from the Committee of 100 and established the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, which was mainly preoccupied with American behavior in general and its involvement in Vietnam in particular. Ralph Schoenman, Russell's personal secretary, would prove the main character leading the foundation. The final years of his life were devoted to the different organizations and he occasionally signed political statements.

The main difference in Russell's attitude in the Second World War was that his reservations with participating in movements and organizations seemed completely gone. He still was, however, skeptical of large groups pursuing particular dogmatic ideals. Also, the aristocratic individualist was seldom easy to work with. Determined, radical, and in the final stages of his life, he wanted his actions to have as much effect as possible. His persistent optimism

[148] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume III, 1944-1967*. pp. 109.
[149] Bertrand Russell, "On Civil Disobedience" 15 April 1961. Reprinted in: *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume III, 1944-1967*. pp. 139.

about the prospect of a better world is shown in the last comments he made on his life-long political undertakings: 'I may have thought the road to a world of free and happy human beings shorter than it is proving to be, but I was not wrong in thinking that such a world is possible, and that it is worth while to live with a view to bringing it nearer.'[150]

3.4 Politics: Radical Strategies

Immediately after the war, Russell was pleased with the skeptical approach the British government took towards Russia. He maintained a good relationship with the Foreign Office in the 1940s and 1950s: they funded some of his writings and paid him to lecture abroad on international politics. Russell stated that the cause of nuclear disarmament surpassed party politics and national boundaries. In contrast with the period of the First World War, Russell was now, understandably, merely focused on international politics. This became clear, for example, when he expressed his concerns about the fact that the CND turned out to be primarily upheld by members of the Labour Party. The introduction of *Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare* started with the sentence: 'It is surprising and somewhat disappointing that movements aiming at the prevention of nuclear war are regarded throughout the West as Left-Wing movements or as inspired by some –ism which is repugnant to a majority of ordinary people.'[151] As he argued in the Second World War, he wanted people to realize that the cause, either fighting the Nazis or nuclear weapons, transcended party politics.

In 1948, Russell wrote a new preface to the third edition of *Roads to Freedom,* his 1918 book on syndicalism, socialism and anarchism. Herein he explained that he was still critical of centralized state socialism, with Stalinist Russia being the main example. In "Why I am not A Communist", Russell stated: 'my objections to modern Communism go deeper than my objections to Marx. It is the

[150] Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume III, 1944-1967*. pp. 223.
[151] Russell, Bertrand. *Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare*. pp. 11.

abandonment of democracy that I find particularly disastrous.'[152] Due to his more pessimistic view of human nature, however, Russell abandoned some of his anarchistic views:

> 'Totalitarian systems in Germany and Russia, with their vast deliberate cruelties, have led me to take a blacker view than I took when I was younger as to what men are likely to become if there is no forcible control over their tyrannical impulses. (…) The optimist now is the man who thinks it possible to hope that the world will not get worse; to suppose that it may get better in any near future is scarcely possible except through willful blindness.'[153]

His outlook had become more gloomy as a result of the international developments. The possibility that his hopes on a peaceful and civilized world would ever come true was increasingly unlikely, but his ideas of how to reach a better situation remained very much the same. Guild socialism was still the better version. In the broader picture, Russell remained skeptical of governmental control and bureaucracy. The main change of thought between the 1918 and the 1948 editions of *Roads to Freedom* was that Russell now considered that a certain degree of freedom ought to be sacrificed in order to maintain stability both at home and abroad.

His view of America had been mixed ever since its intervention in the war in 1917. Especially since it was one of the few countries able to exert influence around the globe, he was disappointed when they repeatedly chose the 'wrong' policy. Right after the war, he thought that America –risen as the most powerful country in the postwar world- came closest to his idea of a world government. America was to lead a confederation holding the monopoly of nuclear power so that it would stabilize the international community regarding nuclear power. Russell's anger towards the Soviet Union, however, did not make him less critical of United

[152] Russell, Bertrand. "Why I am Not A Communist" in: *Portraits from Memory and Other Essays*. pp. 480.
[153] Russell, Bertrand. *Roads to Freedom. Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism*. Preface to third edition in 1948. pp. 2-3.

States. He was, for example, very critical of their obscene anti-communism. America was in his view not able to separate the details from the important issues. Alan Ryan describes how Russell's attitude between 1945 and 1970 had changed considerably, especially towards America:

> 'Immediately after the war, while America still had a monopoly of nuclear weapons, Russell was ready to see world government instituted by the threat or even by the actuality of a nuclear war. By the time he died, he had long been convinced that the Soviet Union was no threat to world peace and the United States a real menace.'[154]

He expected the Soviet Union to become more liberal from the 1950s onwards and if the regime were to change, it was for the better that it would change slowly. As international relations changed between 1945 and 1970, Russell's ideas and proposals were gradually adjusted. He analyzed the different options for betterment, the behavior of the greater nations and the obstacles that had to be overcome in order to achieve that betterment. There must have been doubts and uncertainties in his mind, but they were seldom shown in his explicit and eloquent public appearances.

The 1960s showed a Russell very similar to the Russell of the First World War. As he adopted the strategy of civil disobedience, his relationship with the government worsened overnight. The demonstrations organized by the Committee of 100 before and after his imprisonment often provoked a clash with the authorities. He criticized both individual politicians and governments as a whole. As Alan Ryan observes:

> 'The Russell of 1914 who accused the bishops of supporting the war because they hoped for large dividends on their armaments shares was very like Russell in 1961 accusing Macmillan of being 'much more wicked than Hitler'. In neither case ought we to take him too literally,

[154] Ryan, Alan. *Bertrand Russell. A Political Life.* pp. 172.

> nor ignore the small grain of truth embedded in the wild exaggeration.'[155]

Throughout the decades, Russell had a tradition of accusing politicians as individuals for their actions. He had now acquired the habit of blaming everything on the 'system': 'There are supposed to be two sides, each professing to stand for a great cause. This is a delusion- Kennedy and Khrushchev, Adenauer and de Gaulle, Macmillan and Gaitskell, are pursuing a common aim: the ending of common life.'[156] Although he used to be skeptical and realistic, he became increasingly inclined to see conspiracies. Ralph Schoenman even states in his article "Bertrand Russell and the Peace Movement" how Russell's attitude toward 'capitalism and American imperialism during his last years bears a decidedly Marxist character.'[157] This claim, however, is effectively nuanced by professor of law Edward Sherman in his reply "Bertrand Russell and The Peace Movement: Liberal Consistency or Radical Change?" wherein he explains that Russell's stance in the 1950s and 1960s was, however different from traditional liberalism, very much of a piece with his previous attitude. Russell had consistently rejected Marxism throughout the decades and continued to do so, however, he now was one of the liberals denouncing the aggressive nature of American capitalism and Cold War foreign policy. Sherman rightly concludes how 'Russell's critique of American foreign policy is consistent with the spirit, though not necessarily the vocabulary, of contemporary liberalism.'[158] Although Russell's liberalism underwent some modifications in the twentieth century, it did not, as Schoenman argues, became obsolete in his more radical attitude of the 1950s and 1960s. His critical attitude was provoked by his sincere fear of mutual destruction. Also,

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[155] Ibid. pp. 186.
[156] A leaflet he wrote while he was in Brixton prison entitled "A Message from Bertrand Russell". Reprinted in: Russell, Bertrand. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Volume III, 1944-1967*. pp. 146.
[157] Schoenman, Ralph. "Bertrand Russell and The Peace Movement" in: Nakhnikian, George (ed.). *Bertrand Russell's Philosophy.* Duckworth, London, 1974. pp. 227.
[158] Sherman, Edward. "Bertrand Russell and the Peace Movement: Liberal Consistency or Radical Change?" in: Ibid. pp. 256.

he considered the possession of nuclear weapons a spiteful political choice. His old age caused him to become more impatient with the development of international affairs. For him, the situation was completely black and white, which was of course, true to a considerable extent. The future was at stake, and he wanted to leave a better world behind. After half a century of international disaster, it was about time for people to start making more sensible decisions in world politics.

3.5 Peace: Has Man a Future?

Since the First World War, Russell consistently hoped for an international armed force. He restated his ideal in many of his books throughout the decades. In this period of his life, as he became more impatient, he urged for greater steps towards international cooperation. Even after the disappointment that a nuclear monopoly (and with that a form of world government) could no longer be established in 1949, he held on to his ideal. He was a member of several associations concerned with the creation of a supranational power. Reform in world politics had become essential. Russell was enthusiastic about NATO in the years he advocated an aggressive stance towards Russia. When he pleaded for disarmament and neutrality from 1956 onwards he envisioned a conventional role for NATO, without interference in the nuclear arms race. He supported the United Nations, but the organization was too modest in his perspective. Ryan states: 'His views on international affairs were not so very different from what they had been before (…). His extremist proposals for a world government with a monopoly of destructive power were of a piece with views he had expressed in 1915, and his hostility to America was much like the contempt he displayed in 1918 when he was jailed for it.'[159] In 1954 he once more envisioned the perfect world and articulated more detailed requirements for stability and peace:

> 'The first of these is a single government of the whole world, possessing a monopoly of armed force and therefore

[159] Ryan, Alan. *Bertrand Russell. A Political Life*. pp. 173.

> able to enforce peace. The second condition is a general diffusion of prosperity, so that there is no occasion for envy of one part of the world by another. The third condition (which supposes the second fulfilled) is a low birth rate every-where, so that the population of the world becomes stationary, or nearly so. The fourth condition is the provision for individual initiative both in work and in play, and the greatest diffusion of power compatible with maintaining the necessary political and economic framework.'[160]

In 1958 he realized that the idea of world government was still far away. In *The Cambridge Companion to Bertrand Russell* professor of philosophy Charles Pigden explains how Russell's problem was similar to the dilemma of philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679): the fact that when a world government is most needed, in times of war, the powers would not agree to create one. And in times of relative peace it would not be necessary to create a world government.[161] Both after the First World War and the Second World War Russell expected a general desire for international reform, and both cases did he find himself disappointed. He was careful not to be too critical of the League of Nations or the UN, because after all, both were serious attempts to regulate international relations. In the 1960s he again realized that much had to be done before his dream about a world government would come true.

By the time he died, the world was far from what he would have liked it to be. The Cold War was far from over and the war in Vietnam caused Russell to be immensely frustrated with American foreign policy. At the end he still believed, however, that man had a worthwhile future ahead.

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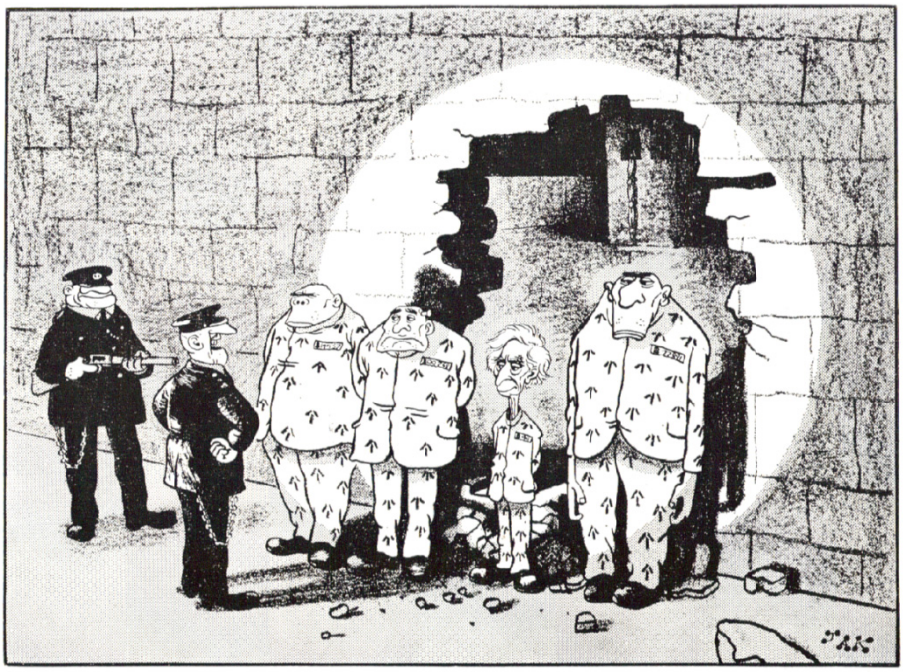
[160] Russell, Bertrand. *Human Society in Ethics and Politics.* pp. 228.

[161] Hobbes had a similar problem when he wanted the inhabitants of the state of nature, the war of all against all, to sign a contract to set up a sovereign. In order to sign there had to be relative peace, but in time of peace there was no need for the contract. Pigden, Charles. "Moral Philosopher or Unphilosophical Moralist?" in: Griffin, Nicholas (ed). *The Cambridge Companion to Bertrand Russell.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003. pp. 486.

3.6 Conclusions

The Russell during the Cold War was very much like the Russell during the First World War, four decades earlier. He still pleaded for the renouncement of war and the reconstruction of international affairs. The terms he used when expressing his message were equally apocalyptic: humankind was either to survive or to be destroyed; there was no in between. The circumstances during the development of the Cold War were indeed serious and there was certainly validity in his claim that man was able to choose between either catastrophe or civilization. The discrepancy between his attitude towards war in the 1940s and in later years can be explained when his views are related to the historical developments. Immediately after the Allies won the war in 1945, Stalin became a threat to world peace. His skepticism towards Russia had been long-standing and the fact that the Red Army beat Hitler did not influence his perspective. In the 1950s and 1960s Russell realized that America was able to adopt equally violent foreign policies and that Soviet Russia may become more liberal. His main concern in this period was brinkmanship; the path to mutual destruction proved how much the modern man had forgotten its humanity.



Cartoon from Evening Standard, September 1961.

Russell addressing Edinburgh members of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament on Trafalgar Square after their arrival in London. 24 September 1960. The Labour Party/Keystone Press.

CONCLUSION

From the Boer War to Vietnam, Bertrand Russell's attitude remained remarkably consistent. While his opinion on practical affairs changed occasionally, his attitude was similar. His 'conversion' in 1901 formed the political fundament that characterized his attitude towards war in the seventy years to come: an aristocratic liberalism combined with the conviction that action had to be undertaken to help humanity deal with the burdens of modernity and to preserve civilization. The modern man was lost and had forgotten about the peaceful alternative of the nineteenth century. Russell felt himself to have an aristocratic duty to present to mankind the benefits he enjoyed. He consequently provided a counterweight to historical forces. His remarkable insight in international relations is shown by the many developments he predicted throughout the century. He was able to analyze situations through the facts he obtained. When men lost their rationality, Russell provided humanity with an overview of the costs and benefits of war. By maintaining a chronological structure, much of Russell's seemingly confusing perspectives can be logically explained, for his attitude was often a matter of cause and effect. He believed that every situation should be looked at by a fresh look and thought, and consequently, he was frustrated with his critics who argued that his attitude was inconsistent. What has been shown throughout the chapters is that Russell's thought was not only consistent within the three time periods, but also over the whole century.

Throughout the period 1914-1970 Russell repeatedly argued that war was never inherently wrong. In some cases, he argued, a good cause could outweigh the means of war. What is important, however ignored by historians, is that his ethics of war were based upon the theory of Norman Angell articulated in *The Great Illusion* (1910): war is futile in the modern age, while in the past war was a means to dominate and conquer. Nations were no longer able to achieve those

aims through war. This belief formed the foundation of Russell's pacifism. Between 1914 and 1940, his pacifist conviction was uninterrupted. In the late 1930s, the dilemma of totalitarianism and non-resistance increasingly gave him sleepless nights. The most important development in his ethics is the change of 1940, where he abandoned his pacifism and for the first time realized that, besides his strictly utilitarian strategy, there were also emotional and intuitive motives to consider. It characterized exactly where the limits of Russell's utilitarianism were positioned. His utilitarian attitude towards war had also been based upon hopes and fears. After the Second World War, there was little change in his strategy, he calculated the benefits and sacrifices and based his entire view upon the outcome. He became ashamed of his pacifism before the outbreak of the Second World War because he had underestimated the Nazis, he remained convinced, however, that his stance in the First World War had been completely justified. His belief that the German halo of glory would be removed by non-resistance was related to his belief that the first war was purely war of prestige, and for a while it looked like the second war would be similar. Russell's views were articulated through a process of eliminating the intolerable alternatives. This is exactly what he did when advocating a preventive war against the Soviet Union in the years 1945-1949. A passive stance towards Stalin reminded him of the passive stance towards Hitler. Despite his natural belief in non-resistance, the twentieth century forced him to take an active stance in order to protect civilization.

His struggle to accustom himself with the modern age is reflected in his view of human nature. Throughout the decades, he often wondered whether man was perhaps destined to live an unhappy life. Remarkably, the First World War hardly affected his faith in human reason as a whole. He directed his frustration rather towards the political elites and governments. In 1948 he admitted that his notion of human nature had become somewhat more pessimistic, but it was never fundamentally altered. Although he sometimes expressed his discontent with his isolated position in society, especially during the First World War, he knew that his individualist nature, his non-conformity, his unconventional and progressive views directed him

into the predicament of being a life-long outsider. The press, national and international, had difficulties assessing his attitude towards war, especially in the years 1945-1949. In the early 1950s, he gained much praise for his achievements, something he was surely content about. It did not, however, change the nature of his individual pursuit of world peace.

Russell's attitude towards war was always an individual stance. His cooperation with other pacifist organizations during the First World War reminded him of the passive and futile nature of pacifism. In Vellacott's study this becomes particularly clear. What is interesting, is that during the First World War he was forced to cooperate with the minority of pacifists he found himself in, but as pacifism had become popular in the interwar period, he urged for individual pacifism. The ideological atmosphere of the 1930s made him weary of tying pacifism to dogmatic organizations. His eagerness to undertake action became clear during his stay in the United States in the Second World War. Being seventy years old, he often expressed the frustration of being away from Britain and the fact that he was not able to contribute to the Allies' efforts. As soon as the war was over, he attempted to make up for the lost time by expressing his views on postwar international relations to everyone who was willing to hear. He often appeared in the media and the previous reservations he held towards cooperating within political organizations was completely gone. It was comforting for Russell to know that people were continuing his work though those organizations.

Russell felt his vocation to be greater than the realm of party politics. He chose to stay aloof from politics and to follow the more hazardous path of rebelling against political decisions instead. He was too much of an individualist; too convinced and too stubborn to be able to compromise and co-operate. Also, he never completely identified with one particular political party. He was liberal in his belief in natural progress; in his conviction that every individual is responsible for making the world a better place and that an individual is able to do so; that too much governmental control was harmful to human freedom and unnecessary in society. He was socialist in his belief that solidarity and democracy were the means to organize both

the national and international community. He was idealist in his pursuit of an ideal world, and in his untouched conviction that a difference could be made if direct action was taken. He was realist in his belief that it was necessary to adopt new ideas, even if they contradicted former perspectives. Interestingly, his personal development somewhat affected his attitude towards the authorities. When he was younger, Russell argued that immoral political choices were made by warlike and short-sighted individuals. In the 1960s, in line with the prevailing opinion among the masses, he increasingly blamed everything on the system: the most powerful nations were destroying civilization together, almost as a conspiracy. But even this radical period in his life was a consequence of the circumstances and remained compatible with his liberal beliefs.

The most remarkable consistency in Russell's political attitude is perhaps his plead for world government. To see xenophobia and nationalist greed vanish and to have a common government serving humanity as a whole, was Russell's idea of utopia since the First World War until he died. The League of Nations or the UN did not come close to this ideal. He would perhaps have been more content with the nature of the UN today, but without a powerful authority, the world remained too instable in his opinion. Although his plans of world government remained rather abstract, it was important for him to keep in mind a perfect picture, an ideal, in order to make his pursuit of world peace more concrete.

How would Russell assess the current international circumstances? Nineteen years after his death, the Cold War finally ended. Russell had argued in the 1950s that the Soviet Union would gradually become more liberal. The collapse of the USSR would therefore not have been completely unexpected for him. The regime had horrified him, but so had the realm of the tsars. Russia's history had in his view always been a peculiar one. After the bipolar international order had vanished, the 1990s brought new problems and a more complex world order. He firmly believed that it was impossible to influence domestic politics from the outside, and he considered national sovereignty essential. This raises interesting questions in relation to the current expectations held by western

democracies with regards to Afghanistan and Iraq. To expect democracy to be implemented by force from the outside was a myth in his view. He also considered it naïve to assume that certain western values are desired by peoples elsewhere. Russell occasionally urged that peace and victory are incompatible. Moreover, the war on terrorism would have acknowledged his theory that fear among the masses causes a centralization of power, which could very well lead to war. Economic inequality could still be one of his concerns today; a more equal distribution of wealth was another important basis for a stable world. The current tensions between the West and the non-western countries indicate just how much his belief that one's own nation is never as honorable as it considers itself and never so evil as one considers the other is still accurate today. In contemporary world politics, moral justifications for war are usually the deciding ones. Utilitarian arguments seem to have faded to the background. It would be a contribution to the discussions on whether men are either to fight or not to fight, to make a Russellian calculation of the costs and benefits. In doing so, the first step is to consider the dimension Russell added to world politics that most people have disregarded throughout history: our common humanity.

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Philosopher Bertrand Arthur William Russell (1872-1970) lived almost an entire century, a century full of change. He was one of the few who dared to provide answers to the impossible questions of twentieth century politics. Several historians have analyzed his attitude towards war, but seldom did they agree about why Russell felt a certain way about war and what caused his often radical attitude. Also, many questions remained unanswered: why did he object to the First World War and supported the Second? And did he really advocate a preventive war against Russia? This book explains the background, motivations and passions behind Russell's sometimes seemingly controversial attitude towards the First World War, the Second World War and the Cold War. By analyzing the consistencies and changes in his thought between 1914 and 1970, the story of twentieth century struggles are relived through the eyes of this invincible rationalist from the nineteenth century.

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