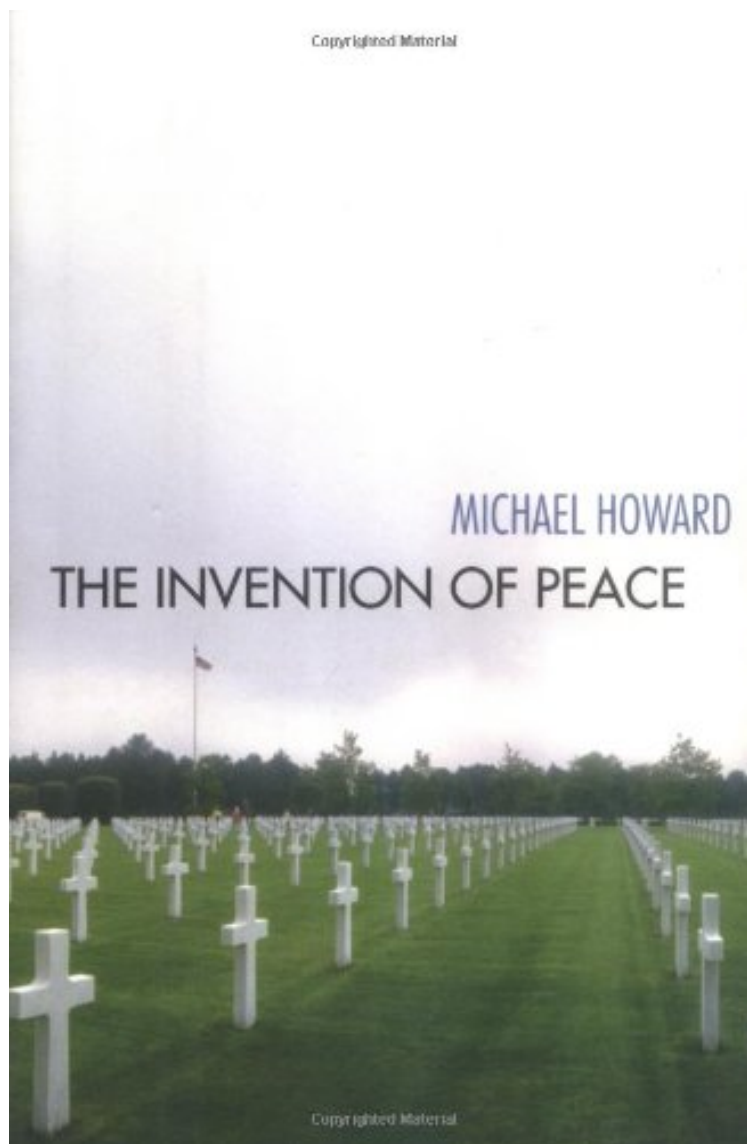


(Free download) The Invention of Peace: Reflections on War and International Order

The Invention of Peace: Reflections on War and International Order

Michael Howard

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Michael Howard : The Invention of Peace: Reflections on War and International Order before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Invention of Peace: Reflections on War and International Order:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A thoroughly dispassionate explanation for the constancy of war. By Dr. Filthy McNasty I've been reading this book slowly for an hour. I'm about halfway through (just finished chapter 3). Michael Howard makes the point that war used to be fought mostly by noblemen and the masses were left out of it. Those were the days of knights, kings and queens. Suddenly everyone started getting educated, decried the old ways, and shouted down all this petty feudal fighting. The result? War went national. Nothing bores me more than writers with axes to grind, even if they are grinding my axes. If Michael Howard is grinding an axe, he's done a brilliant job of covering it up (so far...two chapters yet to go). "Why war?" seems like such a deep question. Howard says no, it's all fairly straightforward and the way he tells it makes perfect sense. He doesn't approach his topic with the assumption that war can be avoided or should be or shouldn't be. There's no condescending of posterity in Michael Howard's book. With two chapters to go I find myself musing over where our current era is going. Apparently, he's going to tell us. But unless it really changes gears, he will have us understand that war is a constant. And really big wars seem to happen when people start shooting for an end of all wars.

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. A fighting chance

By Valjean The title seems mildly ironic, but the cover (at least of my hardbound edition) dispels any subtlety: a panorama of an American military cemetery (Normandy?) with an endless sea of white crosses. Without delving into the philosophic trenches of why we kill one another, Sir Michael Howard has written a bracing account of the lengths we've gone (and continue to go) to avoid such tragedies. A brisk historical survey serves as both background and provider of his introductory thesis: while peace is new, modern, and barely tested, war is very old, established, and more entrenched than we realize. Howard's tone throughout remains refreshingly apolitical. He writes as a scholar, deliberately avoiding the easy stridency his subject offers: how *should* we "invent peace?" Where did our ancestors go wrong? Instead, he simply surveys the landscape and allows readers to (gasp!) draw their own conclusions. This is not to suggest the work lacks recommendations; rather, that they appear pithy and well-reasoned, not sonorous and repetitive. Howard could teach his fellow academics a few lessons about writing for an educated popular audience. Befitting these methods, the book's style is crisp and concise. Quoting one of the author's best points serves as excellent evidence: "World order cannot be created simply by building international institutions and organizations that do not arise naturally out of the cultural disposition and historical experience of their members." Rarely have I seen a better point made in a single sentence; in a seemingly single stroke, Howard crushes the myth that the U.N. (his obvious target) can somehow impose order on unwilling populations. How many millions of dollars-not to mention thousands of lives-could have been saved by heeding this sage advice? Though his historical survey generally supports these points, Howard has actually written more an essay than a book. No major fault in that; I learned more about the historical signposts of peace-the significance of Westphalia, the treaties of Vienna and Berlin-than any university has told me. But covering 1200 years of war (and around 300 of stumbling peace) in a little over a hundred pages feels thin-Sir Michael's pedigree notwithstanding. Even leaving the thin treatment of history aside, a richer development of his major points-like the one quoted above-would have been more than welcome. But these faults pale next to the book's lessons. Anyone concerned about the prospects of peace in our increasingly interconnected world will derive huge benefits from this read. The author's call should especially be heard by those attempting to impose order on a worldly scale (certain groups in New York and The Hague come to mind, along with increasingly powerful non-governmental organizations); this book provides ample evidence for reconsidering their methods-if not their very charter.

5 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Slim, Pointed, It's About Culture and Obedience to a State

By Robert David STEELE Vivas This is an essay with deep insights, but it is not a portal to other knowledge as it lacks any notes or bibliography. The author is one of our top strategists, historians, and teachers of war and peace and this is very much a capstone presentation. The settlement of disputes among groups whose grievances are so great they are willing to die rather than accept impositions from others, are a fact of life. As 11 September has shown us, we are vulnerable to unconventional attacks against civilians, within our own borders--this book is relevant and readable. The core idea is that only organized nation-states that can command the loyalty and obedience of their citizens, are capable of preventing war and championing peace. The concepts of corporate peace and non-governmental peace are explicitly disavowed. Legitimization and brutality are recurring themes in history--peace among nations occurs when mutual respect or fear legitimize the status quo, and incredible brutalities, including routine massacres of "infidel" civilians, occur when states fail to control themselves or their populations. A major disruptive factor in today's world is the combination of educated but unemployed masses within the Arabian and Islamic nations, and the globalization of communications--but it is a one-way globalization, firehosing the Muslims with corporate consumerist visions and impositions, while a Muslim Press Service has yet to form. Individual states--one could suggest that the United States is among them--failing to nurture a clear definition of citizenship, and the requisite loyalties--are destined to suffer internal fragmentation and external attack. Strong militaries are needed to win wars, but overt military intervention is not the route to a sustainable peace in today's complex environment--only diplomacy, cultural outreach, and mutually agreed consensus can create and sustain peace....this is the simple yet brutal message of this book, one our leaders have yet to grasp.

Throughout history the overwhelming majority of human societies have taken war for granted and made it the basis for

their legal and social structures. Not until the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century did war come to be regarded as an unmitigated evil and one that could be abolished by rational social organization, and only after the massive slaughter of the two world wars did this become the declared objective of civilized states. Nevertheless, war in one form or another continues unabated. In this elegantly written book, a preeminent military historian considers why this is so. Is war in some sense still a necessary element in international order? Are war and peace in fact complementary? Does not peace itself breed the conditions that will ultimately lead to war? And if nuclear weapons have made war ultimately suicidal for mankind, what can be done about it? Having devoted half a century largely to studying these questions, Michael Howard offers us his reflections. Unless they can be answered, he notes, the twenty-first century is unlikely to be any more peaceful than the centuries that preceded it.

"War appears to be as old as mankind, but peace is a modern invention," claimed Sir Henry Maine in the middle of the 19th century. In his short, polemic book *The Invention of Peace: Reflections on War and International Order*, Michael Howard develops Maine's argument, and while not completely endorsing it, he convincingly argues that peace "is certainly a far more complex affair than war." At just over a hundred pages, *The Invention of Peace* is more of an essay than a book, and its massive historical sweep will undoubtedly irritate some readers. Beginning in A.D. 800, when war "was recognized as an intrinsic part of the social order," it extends to 2000, when "militant nationalist movements or conspiratorial ones" suggest that in the near future "armed conflict becomes highly probable." However, Howard's credentials for writing this type of macro reflection on war and international relations are impeccable. Having fought in Italy during the Second World War, he has held several chairs of History and War Studies, and remains the president of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. His many books include *War in European History* and a translation of von Clausewitz's classic *On War*. With such qualifications, it is hardly surprising that Howard remains tied to the beliefs of the European Enlightenment, while also acknowledging that "the peace invented by the thinkers of the Enlightenment, an international order in which war plays no part, had been a common enough aspiration for visionaries throughout history, but it has been regarded by political leaders as a practicable or indeed desirable goal only during the past two hundred years." As Howard thoughtfully picks his way through the complex negotiations throughout European history that led to the brief eruption of peace into an otherwise uninterrupted state of war, he hopes that "Kant was right, and that, whatever else may happen, 'a seed of enlightenment' will always survive." Let's hope that he's right. --Jerry Brotton, www.publishersweekly.com Howard, professor emeritus of military and naval history at Yale (*The Lessons of History*; etc.), reviews the history of the concept of peace, which he defines as "the order, however imperfect, that results from agreement between states, and can only be sustained by that agreement." For all its brevity, this book is extraordinarily ambitious in scope. Howard's aim is to examine Western political history from the year 800 to the present, extracting from that history the essential views of each era about the role of war among nations and the possibility of achieving peace. Because the treatment of each era is so compressed (the book is an expanded lecture), readers will have to marshal all their knowledge of history to understand the author's points. This is no introductory survey, but rather a work to turn to for a culminating synthesis of its subject. According to Howard, modern concepts of peace derive from the Enlightenment, and especially from Kant's teaching that a stable world order can arise only from forms of government in which the citizens or subjects have some effective say over the making of war. Howard traces how successive models of world order (conservative, liberal, Marxist) have competed for dominance over the past 200 years. The author convincingly demonstrates that the long struggle for stability among nations is not yet over, and that the latest new world order arising after the end of the Cold War still poses as much danger of conflict as it holds out promises of peace. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From [Booklist](http://www.booklist.org) As an astute essay on peace as an objective in international affairs, Howard's analytically sharp discourse is ultimately pessimistic. Observing that people divide into two camps about peace--those who believe it must be preserved and those who believe it must be attained--Howard inspects that dichotomy as expressed in diplomatic settlements from the Peace of Westphalia onward. Peace preservers tend to be conservatives like Metternich; peace attainers, liberals like Wilson. Regardless of statesmen's proclivities (except those of prophets of class warfare or racial empire), peace came to be conceived as an achievable outcome of a rational ordering of international politics. Yet neither balance-of-power conservatism nor liberal internationalism has, save for a few decades here and there, delivered humanity from war. With the totalitarian ideologies vanquished, Howard still handicaps liberalism's current opportunity, through international organizations and global commerce, to shape a stable world order. Noting resentment of American preeminence and visceral rejection of Western values, his cold-bath conclusion is that "it would be unwise to expect anything of the kind." A pointed big-think tract. Gilbert Taylor Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved