

# Pacifism vs. Just War

By Derrick, Paige, and Rhi

## Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Were the WWII bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki considered just acts of war?

## War

- ▶ War is defined as a state of usually open and declared armed hostile conflict between states or nations.
- ▶ Wars have been documented as far back as the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt.
- ▶ In the US, the president must get the permission of congress to declare war.
- ▶ Enemies often become allies after going to war.

## War continued

- ▶ War secures millions of military and civilian employment positions.
- ▶ War encourages advancement in technology.

## Just War Criteria

- ▶ Must be ordered by competent authority (congress).
- ▶ Must have just cause (self-defense or the protection of rights).
- ▶ All peaceful alternatives must have been exhausted (last resort).
- ▶ There must be right intention with lasting peace being the end goal.

## Pacifism

- ▶ Pacifism is the belief that disputes between nations can and should be settled peacefully.
- ▶ Pacifism ranges from the most extreme view that outlaws violence and killing in every case to the most subtle view that doesn't push their beliefs onto anyone else.
- ▶ Antiwar pacifists claim that **all** wars are unjustifiable.

## Antiwar Pacifism

- ▶ The majority of soldiers in war are in “no immediate danger of death.”
- ▶ The majority of soldiers do not die in “kill or be killed” situations.
- ▶ Therefore, the majority of soldiers are not required to act in personal self-defense.
- ▶ Personal self-defense of the minority can not be just cause for war.

---

- ▶ Therefore, all participation in war is morally wrong.

## Just Cause

- ▶ Self-defense, whether defensive or offensive, preserves rights that are unjustly threatened.
- ▶ Moral rights are entitled to everyone.
- ▶ Defending those rights is a moral obligation.
- ▶ Therefore, war can be just.

## The Principle of Discrimination

“The only permissible objects of direct attack are enemy soldiers.”

A noncombatant is someone whose duties do not include fighting.

## The Principle of Discrimination

- ▶ Noncombatants are innocent third parties.
- ▶ Noncombatants are indirect casualties of war.
- ▶ Killing an innocent intentionally or unintentionally is murder.
- ▶ Murder is impermissible.
- ▶ Therefore, war can never be just.

## The Principle of Discrimination

- ▶ Noncombatants in modern war are used to assist combatants.
- ▶ Assisting combatants creates more opportunities to cause harm to the opposition.
- ▶ Noncombatants indirectly cause harm.
- ▶ Therefore, killing noncombatants is permissible.
- ▶ War can be just even when noncombatants are killed.

## Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Were the WWII bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki considered just acts of war?

## Sources

Lackey, Douglas P., *Ethics of War and Peace*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 1989.

O'Brien, William V., *The Conduct of Just and Limited War*. New York: Praeger, 1981.

Peterson, Linda H., John Brereton, and Joan Hartman. *The Norton Reader*. 2000 United States. 735-747.

Spielvogel, Jackson J., *Western Civilization 5<sup>th</sup> ed.* "The Ancient Near East: The First Civilizations". Wadsworth, 6-23.