War, Law and Humanity

The Campaign to Control Warfare, 1853-1914

James Crossland

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For the Widows in Ypsilanti . . .

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Dramatis Personae

Louis Appia (1818–1898)
Franco-Swiss surgeon and co-founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross (the Committee).

John Charles Ardagh (1840–1907)
Head of British Military Intelligence in South Africa and delegate to the 1899 Hague Conference and the 1906 Geneva Conference.

Clara Barton (1821–1912)
Volunteer medic during the American Civil War and Franco-Prussian Wars. Founder of the American Red Cross.

Johan Basting (1817–1870)
Dutch army surgeon and founder of the Dutch Red Cross.

Henry Whitney Bellows (1814–1882)
New York clergyman and founder of the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC).

Johann Kaspar Bluntschli (1808–1881)
Swiss lawyer and co-founder of the Institute of International Law (IIL).

Charles Bowles (1835–1915)
USSC agent in Europe and unofficial Union representative at the 1864 Geneva Conference.

George Halstead Boyland (1845–1880)
American Civil War surgeon and volunteer medic in the Franco-Prussian War.

Henry Brackenbury (1837–1914)
British army officer and member of the Order of St John of Jerusalem.

Jean-Charles Chenu (1808–1879)
French army surgeon, naturalist and coordinator of the Société de secours aux blessés militaires (SSBM) during the Franco-Prussian War.

Edward A. Crane (1832–1906)
Surgeon and member of both the USSC and the American Association for the Relief of Misery on the Battlefields. Volunteer medic during Franco-Prussian War.

Randal Cremer (1828–1908)
Member of British Parliament, peace activist and co-founder of the Interparliamentary Union (IPU).

Dorothea Dix (1802–1887)
Volunteer medic, human rights activist and Superintendent of Army Nurses for the Union during the American Civil War.

David Dudley-Field (1804–1894)
New York lawyer and co-founder of the IIL.

Guillaume Dufour (1787–1875)
Swiss general and co-founder of the Committee.

Henry Dunant (1822–1910)
Swiss philanthropist, author of *A Memory of Solferino*, co-founder of the Committee and, in later life, member of the peace movement.

Thomas Evans (1823–1897)
Dentist to Napoleon III, volunteer medic in the Franco-Prussian War and promoter of the USSC in Europe.

Frédéric Ferrière (1848–1924)
Nephew of Louis Appia, Red Cross volunteer and eventual Vice-President of the Committee.

Clement Finley (1797–1879)
Union Surgeon-General and opponent of the USSC.

John Furley (1836–1919)
Volunteer medic in numerous wars and founder of both the British Red Cross (BRC) and the St John Ambulance.

John Hall (1795–1866)
Inspector-General of Hospitals for the British Army during the Crimean War.

William A. Hammond (1828–1900)
Surgeon-General of the Union Army after the removal of Clement Finley.

Elisha Harris (1824–1884)
Sanitary theorist, medical inventor and co-founder of the USSC.

Vincent Kennett-Barrington (1844–1903)
Volunteer medic and head of the Stafford House Committee's mission to Constantinople during the Russo-Turkish War.

Nicasio Landa (1830–1891)
Army surgeon and founder of the Spanish Red Cross.

Leon LeFort (1829–1893)
Surgeon and coordinator of the SSBM during the Franco-Prussian War.

Jonathan Letterman (1824–1872)
Union army surgeon and Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac.

Francis Lieber (1800–1872)
German American lawyer, philosopher and author of the Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field, General Orders 100.

Thomas Longmore (1816–1895)
British army surgeon, Surgeon-General, ally of Nightingale and advocate of BRC.

Robert Loyd-Lindsay (1832–1901)
Crimean War veteran, volunteer in the Franco-Prussian War and the Balkans conflicts, and co-founder of the BRC.

William MacCormac (1836–1901)
British army surgeon, head of the Anglo-American ambulance in the Franco-Prussian War and director of surgeon recruitment for the Stafford House Committee.

William MacPherson (1858–1927)
Major general in the Royal Army Medical Corps and architect of the reorganization of the BRC.

Fedor Fedorovich Martens (1845–1909)
Russian lawyer, diplomat and organizer of the Brussels and Hague Conferences.

Théodore Maunoir (1806–1869)
Swiss surgeon and co-founder of the Committee.

Louisa McLaughlin (1836–1921)
Volunteer medic during the Franco-Prussian War and the Balkans conflicts.

Gustave Moynier (1826–1910)
Swiss lawyer, co-founder of both the IIL and the Committee. President of the latter.

Jaromir von Mundy (1822–1894)
Austrian surgeon, medical inventor, founder of the Vienna Ambulance Service and Stafford House Committee surgeon during the Russo-Turkish War.

Florence Nightingale (1820–1910)
Pioneering nurse and head of nurses for the British army at Scutari Barracks during the Crimean War.

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903)
Architect and co-founder of the USSC.

Frédéric Passy (1822–1912)
Member of the French Chamber of Deputies, economist, peace activist and founder of both the Société Française pour l'arbitrage entre Nations and the IPU.

Emma Pearson (1828–1893)
Volunteer medic in the Franco-Prussian War and the Balkans conflicts.

Nicolai Pirogov (1810–1881)
Russian surgeon and volunteer medic in the Crimean, Franco-Prussian and Russo-Turkish Wars.

Gustave Rolin-Jaequemyns (1835–1902)
Belgian lawyer and co-founder of the IIL.

William Howard Russell (1820–1907)
War correspondent who made his name documenting soldier suffering during the Crimean War.

Charles Ryan (1853–1926)
Australian surgeon. Volunteer medic in the Franco-Prussian War and Stafford House Committee surgeon during the Russo-Turkish War.

William T. Stead (1849–1912)
Journalist and peace activist who covered the Hague conferences.

Bertha von Suttner (1843–1914)
Austrian peace activist and author of *Lay Down your Arms*.

Sano Tsunetami (1822–1902)
Politician and founder of the Japanese Red Cross.

Charles van der Velde (1818–1898)
Retired Dutch naval officer and Red Cross volunteer during the Schleswig-Holstein War.

Timeline

		1853
October	Russia Britain	Outbreak of Crimean War. The last of a series of international peace conferences held throughout the 1840s and 50s convenes in Edinburgh.
		1854
March	Russia	Britain and France join Crimean War.
September–October	Britain	William Howard Russell's reports on the poor condition of soldiers in Crimea are published in *The Times.*
November	Ottoman Empire	Florence Nightingale arrives at Scutari Barracks.
		1855
January	Britain	Lord Aberdeen's government falls after intense public and parliamentary criticism over mishandling of the war.
February	Ottoman Empire	British Sanitary Commission arrives in the Crimea.
		1856
March–April	France	Treaty of Paris ends Crimean War and Declaration of Paris lays down regulations on privateering and the use of blockades.
August		Jean-Charles Chenu calls for increased financial investment and professionalization in military-medical services.
		1859
June	Italy	Henry Dunant and Louis Appia volunteer to tend to wounded in the aftermath of the Battle of Solferino.
	Britain	Nightingale's reforms of Britain's military-medical system begin.

1861

April–July	United States	War between the Union and the Confederacy begins. Henry Bellows, Frederick Law Olmsted, Dorothea Dix, Elizabeth Blackwell and Elisha Harris conceive of the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC). Clara Barton nurses victims of a Confederate ambush.

1862

February	United States	Surgeon-General Finley ousted by USSC and replaced with William Hammond.
May–August		Jonathan Letterman becomes Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac. Institutes reforms of Union military-medical system.
October		Harris patents his stretch-bearing railcar.
November	Europe	*A Memory of Solferino* is released to great acclaim.

1863

February	Switzerland	Dunant, Appia, Gustave Moynier, Guillaume Henri Dufour and Théodore Maunoir form the International Committee for Relief to Wounded Soldiers (Committee).
April	United States	Francis Lieber's *General Orders no.100* (Lieber Code) is issued to Union commanders.
October	Switzerland	First Geneva Conference is convened.
August–November	Britain and France	USSC established branches in Paris and London.

1864

February	Denmark	Outbreak of Second Schleswig-Holstein War. Appia and Charles van der Velde sent as Red Cross volunteers.
June	France	CSS *Alabama* sunk off Cherbourg.
April–June	United States	Thomas Evans tours the Union as an agent of Napoleon III.
August	Switzerland	Second Geneva Conference, at which the Geneva Convention is signed.
November–December	Prussia/France	Evans advises Napoleon III and King Wilhelm of the need to replicate the USSC.

		1865
March	United States	Barton commences tracing of POWs and missing soldiers.
April		Civil War ends.
		1866
May	Prussia	Prussian army accepts Johan Kaspar Bluntschli's translation of Lieber Code.
June–August	Austria	Austro-Prussian War demonstrates the efficiency of the Prussian Red Cross.
May–October	United States	USSC and Christian Commission end their operations. American Association for the Relief of the Misery of Battlefields (American Association) is formed.
		1867
March	Switzerland	*La Guerre et la Charité* is published.
August		Dunant is kicked out of the Committee.
September		International Peace Congress held in Geneva.
June	Japan	Sano Tsunetami departs for Europe on a military fact-finding mission.
July	Prussia	North German Confederation is founded. Prussian Army buys up plans for Harris' railcar.
April–November	France	International Exposition in Paris displays USSC and Red Cross medical equipment. First International Red Cross Congress held in Paris. Frédéric Passy forms the Ligue Internationale et Permanente de la Paix.
		1868
October	Switzerland	Conference in Geneva fails to agree on new maritime articles for the Geneva Convention. Moynier joins Passy's Ligue Internationale.
November	Russia	Declaration of St Petersburg speaks of the need to set 'technical limits at which the necessities of war ought to yield to the requirements of humanity'.
		1869
April	Switzerland	Maunoir dies.
September		Appia makes Barton aware of the Red Cross.
		1870
July–December	France	Outbreak of Franco-Prussian War. Anglo-American ambulance formed in Paris. Barton works on behalf of refugees after being prohibited from frontline service.

August	Britain	National Aid Society (NAS) founded by Robert Loyd-Lindsay and John Furley.
September	United States	American Association sends donations to France and Germany.
		1871
January	France	Wilhelm I proclaimed Emperor of the Kaiserreich.
March		Communards seize Paris. Dunant negotiates with them for the release of prisoners.
May		'Bloody Week' and end of the Franco-Prussian War.
		1872
April	Britain	Longmore calls for the formation of a permanent, military-supervised Red Cross.
April	Spain	Outbreak of Third Carlist War. Furley and Nicasio Landa active despite no Red Cross mandate.
June–August	France/Britain	Universal Alliance for Order and Civilisation founded by Dunant.
September	Switzerland	Alabama Claims tribunal ends in Geneva.
October	United States	Lieber dies.
		1873
June–September	Belgium	Institute of International Law (IIL) founded in Ghent. International peace conference held in Brussels ends in schism between Passy faction and the IIL.
		1874
July	Belgium	Fedor Fedorovich Martens, with the support of Tsar Alexander II, convenes a conference on the laws of war in Brussels. It ends with no binding agreement.
		1875
July	Switzerland	Dufour dies.
		1876
February	Switzerland	Fréderic Ferrière is despatched to Montenegro to assist refugees and found a national Red Cross society.
February	Spain	Third Carlist War ends.
April	Ottoman Empire	Bulgarian uprising against Ottoman rule leads to atrocities against civilians and outrage across Europe.
December	Britain	Stafford House Committee formed with the aim to provide relief to Ottoman soldiers.
May	United States	Bellows dissolves the American Association.

		1877
January	Japan	Haskuaisha founded by Tsunetami.
April	Ottoman Empire	Outbreak of Russo-Turkish War.
May	Belgium	IIL's appeal for Bashi-Bazouks to adhere to international law is ignored.
June	Russia	Martens issues an instructional code for Russian troops.
	Britain	Furley founds the St John Ambulance Association.
		1878
March	Ottoman Empire	Russo-Turkish War ends.
		1879
July	Britain	Stafford House Committee dissolves.
November	France	Chenu dies.
		1880
September	Britain	*Oxford Manual* is published.
		1881
October	Germany	Bluntschli dies.
		1882
January	United States	Bellows dies.
March		Washington signs the Geneva Convention. American Red Cross founded.
		1887
May	Japan	Japanese Red Cross founded.
		1889
	Austria	*Lay Down Your Arms* is published to wide acclaim.
June	France	Interparliamentary Union founded.
		1892
	France	Reforms of voluntary aid implemented, aligning Red Cross activities more closely with the work of the army medical service.
		1895
September	Britain	Longmore dies.
		1896
February	Ottoman Empire	Barton launches relief mission for victims of the Armenian massacres.

		1897
July	Switzerland	Dunant joins the peace movement at Suttner's urging.
		1898
April–August	Cuba and Philippines	American-Spanish War. ARC's performance criticized.
May	Switzerland	Appia dies.
August	Russia	Tsar Nicholas II issues rescript calling for disarmament conference.
December	Europe	William Stead's 'Peace Crusade' begins.
		1899
May–July	Netherlands	First Hague Conference.
October	South Africa	Outbreak of Boer War. Arbitration suggested.
		1900
September	Netherlands	Convention for the Pacific Settlement of Disputes comes into force.
		1901
June	Britain	Loyd-Lindsay dies.
December	Norway	Dunant and Passy are jointly awarded the first Nobel Peace Prize.
		1902
May	South Africa	Boer War ends.
December	Japan	Tsunetami dies.
		1904
February	China	Outbreak of Russo-Japanese War.
May	United States	Barton steps down as ARC president.
		1905
February	United States	New ARC charter aligns the organization closely with the War Department.
September	China	Russo-Japanese War ends. Japanese Red Cross universally praised.
July	Britain	BRC reformed and refounded.
		1906
June	Switzerland	Second Geneva Conference ends in revised Geneva Convention, which classifies volunteers as military-medical auxiliaries.

		1907
February	Britain	Russell dies.
June–October	Netherlands	Second Hague Conference.
		1909
	Britain	Voluntary Aid Detachment scheme established.
June	Russia	Martens dies.
		1910
August	Switzerland	Moynier dies.
	Britain	Nightingale dies.
October	Switzerland	Dunant dies.
		1912
April	Atlantic Ocean	Stead dies aboard the *RMS Titanic*.
	United States	Barton dies.
June	France	Passy dies.
		1914
June	Austria	Suttner dies.
July–August	Europe	First World War begins.

Introduction: A Time for Angels

In the summer of 1897, a white-bearded recluse residing in the Swiss town of Heiden penned an assessment of the evolution of war to which he had long borne witness:

> War is not yet dead! If it has changed its form it is only to become more terrible! Everything that makes up the pride of our civilisation will be at the services of war: your electric railroads, your airships, your submarines and flying bridges, your snap-shot photography, your telegraphs, telephones, and so many other wonderful inventions will perform splendid service for war side by side with the instruments of human murder. What does not man invent to make death quicker and surer![1]

The author of this apocalyptic tirade was Henry Dunant, an impoverished sixty-eight-year-old convalescent who, a little over three decades before, had inspired the creation of the International Committee of the Red Cross by voicing concerns for the suffering of soldiers in battle. The founding of this organization in Geneva in 1863 provided the catalyst for the Red Cross movement, which spread across much of the world in the decades that followed, manifesting as national aid societies comprised of volunteers offering medical and material assistance to sick and wounded soldiers.

To Dunant's regret, there were more than enough opportunities for the Red Cross faithful to answer his call to humanity – war, barbarism and bloodshed plagued the latter half of the nineteenth century. It was only a few months after the Red Cross was founded that an army of 38,000 Danes was crushed by a coalition of Prussians and Austrians double its size. Two years later, in 1866, the victors turned their guns on each other, engaging in a war that, despite lasting only seven weeks, sent over 80,000 soldiers to their graves. On the heels of Prussia's victory over Austria came yet another triumph when, in 1871, the armies of the newly proclaimed Kaiser Wilhelm I inflicted a colossal and humiliating defeat on France, leaving a butcher's bill in the region of 350,000 dead and wounded. The slaughter was not confined to Europe. As Prussia marched to its moment of glory in its war against Denmark, in distant China a fourteen-year-long conflict against the Qing Dynasty, led by a failed civil servant-turned warlord would-be messiah named Hong Xiuquan, ended in days of massacre on the streets of Nanjing, adding to an already catastrophic death toll of 20 million men, women and children. Three years before this bloody climax to what became known as the 'Taiping Rebellion', an ocean away in the United States, a civil war of a different kind broke out, dividing

the country between north and south. By the time it ended in 1865, this four-year-long industrial-scale conflagration would claim the lives of at least 750,000 soldiers and civilians.[2] A decade after the American Civil War, the Balkans was ravaged by its own outbreak of violent secessionism from which, in 1877, there erupted a war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire – the second clash between the two great powers to have occurred within a generation. The Balkans conflicts were characterized both by sectarian violence and the lurid reporting of war correspondents left aghast at the 'barbarous horse trappings, hair tufted lances and wild gestures' of the Ottoman irregular troops, 'an unruly mob of undisciplined soldiers' that gained notoriety for their manifold acts of brigandage. At the same time that these reports of barbarism were flowing out of Anatolia, machine guns built in the United States and operated by German- and French-trained soldiers of the Japanese Imperial Army cut down katana-wielding samurai during the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877. Although it ended decades before Dunant's pained proclamation, the nature of this conflict foreshadowed its substance, offering a picture of future wars in which industry, science and innovation would be bent to serve the irresistible forces of violence and destruction.[3]

In the midst of this carnage the Red Cross volunteers held, for the most part, to a necessary dictum – it was not the place of the Samaritans and surgeons who wore the Red Cross badge to condemn the practice of war, however horrifically it might manifest. There was an important reason for this stance, which struck at the heart of the Red Cross's potential to be an effective mitigator of wartime suffering. No general would countenance civilians opposed to war subverting his soldiers, tending their wounds while speaking of the laying down of arms and the futility of violence. For most Red Cross volunteers, this need to exorcise pacifist sentiment from their mission came easy. The fact that the Red Cross movement grew in membership, purview and importance with each passing, war-scarred year did, after all, point to a conclusion that was incompatible with pacifism – wars will always take place and, moreover, volunteers will always be needed to tend the wounded without pause to question why. Peace was a laudable, yet forlorn dream. And yet, decades after conceiving of the movement that would hold to this assessment of war, Dunant emerged from his hermit-like existence in Heiden to both lament the years of blood needlessly spilt and denounce the symbiosis of technological progress and industrial-scale death that was poisoning the fin de siècle. 'The Red Cross societies were the first landmark of brotherly solidarity in the noblest field of philanthropy', he reflected, but for all their labours the volunteers could only achieve so much. What was needed now was for the forces of humanity to take the next logical step – to realize that only peace could defeat war.[4]

This book is a story of humanitarians, surgeons, lawyers, pacifists, progressives, politicians, utopians and adventurers. People like Dunant who, shocked by the wanton violence and lawlessness of the conflicts that were erupting around them, resolved to try and control war – its practice, its character and even its capacity to be waged. Unlike the Red Cross founder, most of these campaigners chose their means of combating Mars and stuck to it. For those who laboured in the medical services of their nation's armies, penned laws of war in grand conference halls, or flocked to the banner of the Red Cross and other humanitarian groups, war was accepted as an inevitability. The best and only response was to control the scale and degree of wartime suffering by

improving military medicine and the standards of soldier welfare, or by developing new rules and norms that would bring limitations to the level and form of violence that could be dealt. To the minds of those who sought peace as the ultimate means of control, these attempts to 'civilize' or 'humanize' war were as futile as they were dangerous. How could banning one specific type of weapon, or repairing the broken bodies of soldiers, only for them to be thrown back into the maw of battle, possibly remedy the ills of war? How could the act of regenerating armies by keeping soldiers fighting fit do anything but prolong the slaughter? As Baroness Bertha von Suttner, one of the more venerable peace-seekers of the age, put it when musing on the services provided to soldiers by the Red Cross, 'today it seems there might be something still better than this good – not to send them out!'[5] For Suttner and her ilk, limiting war would never be a substitute for its eradication.

This schism in the campaign to control war was born of the differing perceptions held by the humanitarians and peace-seekers who were living through an era in which the nature of war was changing before their very eyes. From the period of the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1853 through until the fateful summer of 1914, the world's militaries combined new weapons such as machine guns, rapid-reload rifles and fast-firing artillery to dread effect with ordnance that could expand, ignite or explode upon contact with human flesh. Iron-clad warships bristling with rifled cannons, hot air balloons that gave long-range sight to artillery and, in later years of the era, planes from which grenades and bombs – perhaps containing gas – could be lobbed, as well as trains capable of moving battalions of men at great speed across vast distances fired war-like imaginations. The development of these means of expanding the boundaries of war by enlarging the battle space and intensifying its lethality was inseparable from the growing rivalry between the world's great powers, particularly following the realization of German unification in 1871, and the resulting disruption of the balance of power in Europe. Together, this geopolitical shift and the Anglo-German arms race of the decades that followed underpinned a creeping, fatalistic belief among military men and civilians alike that a future war of frightening magnitude lay on the horizon. With this fear of future war came increased consideration for the misery and suffering that such a conflict would engender, fed by the graphic reports of wounded and diseased soldiers, starving civilians and shell-flattened villages that were filed by war correspondents from the battlefields of Alma, Solferino, Shiloh, Königgrätz, Sedan and Mukden – each a blood-stained milestone on the march to 1914. Caught in the midst of this storm of fear and change, the humanitarians and peace-seekers rallied, as mindful as anyone of what was at stake if the practice of war continued to develop at so rapid a rate and in such an unfettered way.[6]

Base concerns for humanity and its future aside, the motivations of those who waged the campaign to control war were diverse. Charity, empathy, scientific investigation, divine guidance, nationalism, internationalism, self-promotion, professional advancement and future war planning all served as driving forces for both humanitarians and peace-seekers, whose backgrounds and competencies were just as varied. Some of the humanitarian volunteers were simply concerned citizens – people who had never seen a battlefield or received little, if any, medical training. Dunant fell into this category; so too did the founder of the American Red Cross, Clara Barton,

and her legendary British precursor Florence Nightingale, whose determination to assist those otherwise left to the indifference of the British army medical staff during the Crimean War inspired a generation of humanitarians to take up bandages and force their way into war zones, whether welcomed by the military authorities or not. There were others possessed of more recognized competencies. Forward-thinking army surgeons like Thomas Longmore, Jonathan Letterman, Nicolai Pirogov and Jean-Charles Chenu channelled their frustrations at the lack of military-medical preparedness within their nation's armies into campaigns to modernize hospitals, test new methods of amputation, improve the treatment of gunshot wounds, and develop the quickest and most stable means of evacuating the wounded to safety. And then there were those who brought something more than either medical knowledge or basic empathy to the campaign. These were the visionaries who saw the controlling of war as a means by which a new world could be built – a more humane and healthy world in which science, progress and order would reign supreme. These were the likes of the pioneering American Civil War surgeon William A. Hammond, who believed that the infusing of logistics and science into military medicine would not only ensure victory for the Union in its fight against the Confederacy, but would also provide foundations on which to build a stable, educated and prosperous United States in the years of peace to come. He shared this vision with the assortment of doctors and businessmen who founded the Union's largest humanitarian organization, the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC). Conceived in the summer of 1861, the USSC channelled the regional philanthropic energies of the northern United States into the creation of a nation-spanning military-medical juggernaut. The USSC also championed the need for humanitarian volunteers to have a place on the battlefield, observing with a keen sense of prophecy how the battles of Chickamauga, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg were mere precursors to the colossal engagements that would define the wars of the future. The numbers of wounded created by such battles demanded not only the harnessing of volunteers by armies to supplement the work of their official medical departments, but also higher standards of discipline and professionalism within the ranks of the humanitarians. The USSC's vision of 'methodized' humanitarianism was, however, only one conception of how the volunteers could bring order to the chaos of war. For Dunant – at least, before his turn to outright pacifism in the 1890s – Christian charity and a willingness to help were all that was needed for the angels of the world to deliver mercy to its battlefields. This view was not too dissimilar to that held by Quaker volunteers as well as humanitarian adventurers like the British Red Cross founder John Furley, who initially saw the Red Cross symbol as a licence to roam war zones at will in the name of humanity. A defining aspect of the humanitarians' campaign was a prolonged argument over this issue – is spontaneous charity in the event of war enough, or do volunteers need to become one with the armies they serve, preparing, like soldiers, for the battles ahead?

The labours of these battlefield angels – whether they were "amateurs" like Dunant or 'professionals' like the USSC – were only one part of the story to control wartime suffering. No less crucial than the actions of the volunteers were the words of those who tried to curb the excesses of wartime violence through ideas and paperwork, rather than bandages and bone-saws. These were the lawyers and statesmen whose efforts to

craft laws that would govern the behaviour of troops, the treatment of civilians and the use of new weapons, manifested in ways that frequently intersected with the labours of both humanitarian volunteers and army surgeons. It was, after all, the drafting in 1864 of an international humanitarian law treaty – the First Geneva Convention – that officially gave birth to the Red Cross. The man who partnered with Dunant to conceive of this convention, Gustave Moynier, understood the nexus between international law and humanitarianism all too well. In addition to serving as president of the International Committee of the Red Cross from 1863 until his death in 1910, he was also a co-founder of the Institute of International Law (IIL), a group of lawyers who assumed the burden of drafting international codes for both the conduct of war and the preservation of peace. The IIL's greatest struggles came in tandem with those of the battlefield humanitarians, who suffered both triumph and tragedy in pursuit of their cause during the wars of German unification and the Balkans conflicts of the 1870s. These wars were particularly decisive in setting both the IIL's expectations of what it could achieve through the regulation of war and shaping the nature of the Red Cross's humanitarian mission, forcing the battlefield angels to become more pragmatic, professionalized and militarized in their responses to conflicts.

Neither the IIL nor the Red Cross were alone in having to alter their approach to controlling war, particularly in the wake of Prussia's triumph over France in 1871. For the peace-seekers who had been near-dormant in their activism since the Crimean War, the 1870s marked a time of cautious rebirth for a movement that had come to be derided as naïve and utopian. Faith-based pacifism, belief in free-trade and the desires of both socialist and nationalist radicals to build a world of peace on the ruins of an old order crushed by revolution had characterized the peace movement for decades. In the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War, however, the peace-seekers joined the IIL in focusing on the promotion of arbitration – the system by which nations on the precipice of war could bring their quarrel to a neutral tribunal in an effort to negotiate a settlement rather than take up arms. The campaign for arbitration restored the peace movement, giving it a tantalizingly plausible means of achieving its ultimate aim, even as war clouds began to darken over Europe during the final years of the nineteenth century. By assessing the paths taken by peace-seekers like Bertha von Suttner and the French politician Frédéric Passy alongside those trodden by the likes of Dunant and Moynier, this study demonstrates that the two factions in the campaign to control war were more closely bound by extrinsic circumstances than first appears. Indeed, at the heart of this book lies the contention that it is only by looking at the intertwined stories of the humanitarians and the peace-seekers of this era that a true appreciation can be gained of how tangible the campaign to control war was to those who fought it. Justifiably or not, those party to the campaign often conceptualized their efforts as being part of a single initiative forged in response to the threat of war, despite the clear points of divergence that existed between those who sought to either mitigate the excesses of war or seek its end as a practice.

The conceptions and motivations of the humanitarians and peace-seekers will dominate much of the discussion that follows. This book, however, is not an attempt to comprehensively document the numerous breakthroughs that occurred in military medicine, international law, disarmament and arbitration in the decades leading up to

the First World War. A wealth of literature is available for the reader who is interested in these topics, and there is no need here to reiterate the findings of the historians and legal scholars who have engaged with them in great detail.[7] The same can be said of the many conflicts that pock-marked the decades leading up to 1914. For the purposes of brevity, I have focused only on those wars in which events of significance in the campaign to control war unfolded. Again, the scholarship on the various wars that erupted across the Ottoman Empire between the 1880s and 1914, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, as well as the many colonial wars of the age is vast.[8] There is no need here to delve into each bloody conflagration. This book's approach to exploring the wars, humanitarian initiatives, peace-seeking efforts and international laws of this period is necessitated both by a desire to avoid well-covered ground, and the need to move discussion of the war-humanitarianism nexus into a space where it can be both stripped of romanticism, and treated as something other than the history of 'isms'.[9] By focusing here on the individuals who constructed the modern systems of military medicine and international law and, in ways both implicit and explicit, questioned the norms of what was humane or necessary on the battlefield, this book aims simply to tell an important story – the story of what happened during the six decades leading up to the First World War when an array of people, from a number of nations and for a variety of reasons, tried to create a world in which wars would either be fought humanely, or not be fought at all.

1

The Crimean Crucible

Richard Cobden – member of the British parliament – rose from his chair and took the lectern. The audience he cast his gaze over was modest in size but impressive in appearance, the assembly enhanced by the Georgian splendour of the Edinburgh Music Hall into which it had crammed to hear Cobden speak. This gathering, held on 13 October 1853, was the most recent in a series of peace conferences that had taken place over the course of the previous five years in Brussels, Paris, London, Frankfurt and Manchester. For the most part these had been grand occasions, drawing pacifists, politicians, economists and activists from Europe and the United States, all desirous of building a peaceful world on the foundations of free trade and international cooperation. The success of each congress seemed to build on that of its predecessor. The reason for this, Cobden noted to those gathered in the Music Hall, was obvious. With the exception of the occasional revolutionary or sectarian flare up, mid-nineteenth century Europe was enjoying the fact 'that since the year 1815 there has been no general or considerable war'. And yet, as Cobden had to admit to his listeners, a threat to that happy status quo was presently hanging over all humanity. Despite the peace-seeker's efforts to push for the disarmament of Europe's militaries, the arbitration of disputes between states, free trade and the development of international law, Cobden conceded that the willingness of states to wage war had not abated in the years after Napoleon's final defeat, and that 'all the nations of Europe are in a position so prepared for war, as if but yesterday the treaty of peace had been signed'.[1] The crowd rumbled in discontent at this statement, proven as it had been barely days before the peace-seekers descended on Edinburgh when news came that Sultan Abdülmecid, ruler of the Ottoman Empire, had declared war on Russia.

The grievances between Abdülmecid and Tsar Nicholas I had been simmering for years, but it was the latter's ordering of his armies to occupy the Ottoman principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in June 1853 that marked the beginning of the end of the Pax Europa. Addressing this ominous turn of events, Cobden accepted that neither ruler could be persuaded to depart from the path of war they had chosen. At stake in the quarrel was the old issue of pilgrims' rights to travel unmolested through the Holy Land, coupled with geo-strategic concerns over Russian access to the eastern Mediterranean. War between the forces of the Sultan and the Tsar would happen. What remained for the peace-seekers was to ensure that the fighting did not spread beyond the fringes of the Black Sea. To this end, Cobden pledged to his audience that he would

oppose in parliament any notion that Britain should 'exercise God's vengeance upon Russia for doing an act of injustice to Turkey'.[2] Such non-interventionist sentiments, however, were out of step with the thinking of many within the British government and its military steeped as most officials and officers were in a culture of Russophobia. Despite its hostility towards Russia, Britain nevertheless made diplomatic attempts to broker a peace in the months that followed the Edinburgh congress; however, British officials were fearful of Russia shattering the already fragile Ottoman Empire and gaining access to strategically important ports. And so, on 20 March 1854, Britain, along with France, officially took the side of Abdülmecid. What followed was a war that erupted in no less than five theatres across the northern hemisphere, belying the rather myopic name that historians have since bestowed upon it – the Crimean War.[3]

Cobden and his disappointed followers felt the impact of this war – the first fought by Britain against a great power for more than a generation – acutely. As the war progressed the peace-seekers continued to lament and record the loss of blood and treasure. They made appeals to the government, handed out pamphlets calling for a cessation to hostilities in halls and taverns, placed placards denouncing the war in the streets but still the war dragged on until March 1856. The peace-seekers' failure to bring an end to the war was not, however, the primary defeat they suffered. The real hammer blow dealt by the Crimean War was the fact that, as 'the voice of reason, the lessons of experience, the suggestions of religious humility were drowned in a passionate tumult of popular excitement', the momentum that had been built up by the peace movement in decades prior swiftly crumbled. Both Cobden and his colleague in the London Peace Society, the Quaker MP John Bright, were shouted down for their views in parliament and, when Bright attempted to hold a peace rally in Manchester, he was burned in effigy by his own constituents. Set against such war-like passions all the peace-seekers could do was to wait out the storm and, as Bright put it, 'hope sometimes for better times'. This sentiment was forlorn. Although the London Peace Society continued to meet and pacifistic statements were still occasionally expressed in parliament by Bright and Cobden, it was not until 1867, two years after the latter's death and eleven years after the Crimean War had ended, that another international peace conference comparable to the Edinburgh meeting took place. Near to, though not quite mortally wounded, the peace movement that had flourished in Europe since the early nineteenth century was just one of the many casualties of the Crimean War.[4]

It was not just the cause of peace that was impacted by a war that proffered visions of a future in which weaponry would be more devastating, casualties more numerous and the scale of suffering higher than most would be willing to tolerate. These changes in the nature of warfare were not immediately apparent to most observers. Many soldiers of the Crimean War attacked their foes on horseback wielding sabres, while their peasant orderlies struggled to move aged cannon on donkey-drawn carts along muddy tracks that sufficed for roads. The British army despatched to the Crimea bore more than a passing resemblance to that which the Duke of Wellington had led against Napoleon over a generation earlier, while their Russian enemies marched with decades-old smooth-bore muskets in hand, obsolete artillery pieces at the rear and, particularly among the Cossack soldiers, the prospect of a suicidally heroic bayonet charge on their minds.[5]