



**IHS Summer Seminars 2010: “Morality, Capitalism, and Freedom”
“The State and Modern War”
Dr. David M. Hart**

Key Points:

- the “original sin” of the state is that it was born of war, violence, and conquest
- early states: dominant prince consolidates core territory by “internal conquest”
- expansion beyond core territory by conquest and war
 - overseas: colonialism, imperialism (Spain, Britain)
 - continental hinterland (Russia, USA)
- war is used to consolidate or maintain unity of nation state (American Civil War German Reich)
- key bureaucratic institutions of the modern state arose out of the need to fund, organise, and wage war
- prior to the welfare states of the 20thC, 90% of all state revenue went to pay for war fighting
- the “Thirty Years War of the 20thC” destroyed the liberal order of the 19thC and lead to total war and the total state, industrialised killing, hyperinflation, communist revolution, Military-Industrial Complex
- key component of classical liberal tradition is opposition to war and expansion of state power

The Place of War in Our Society:

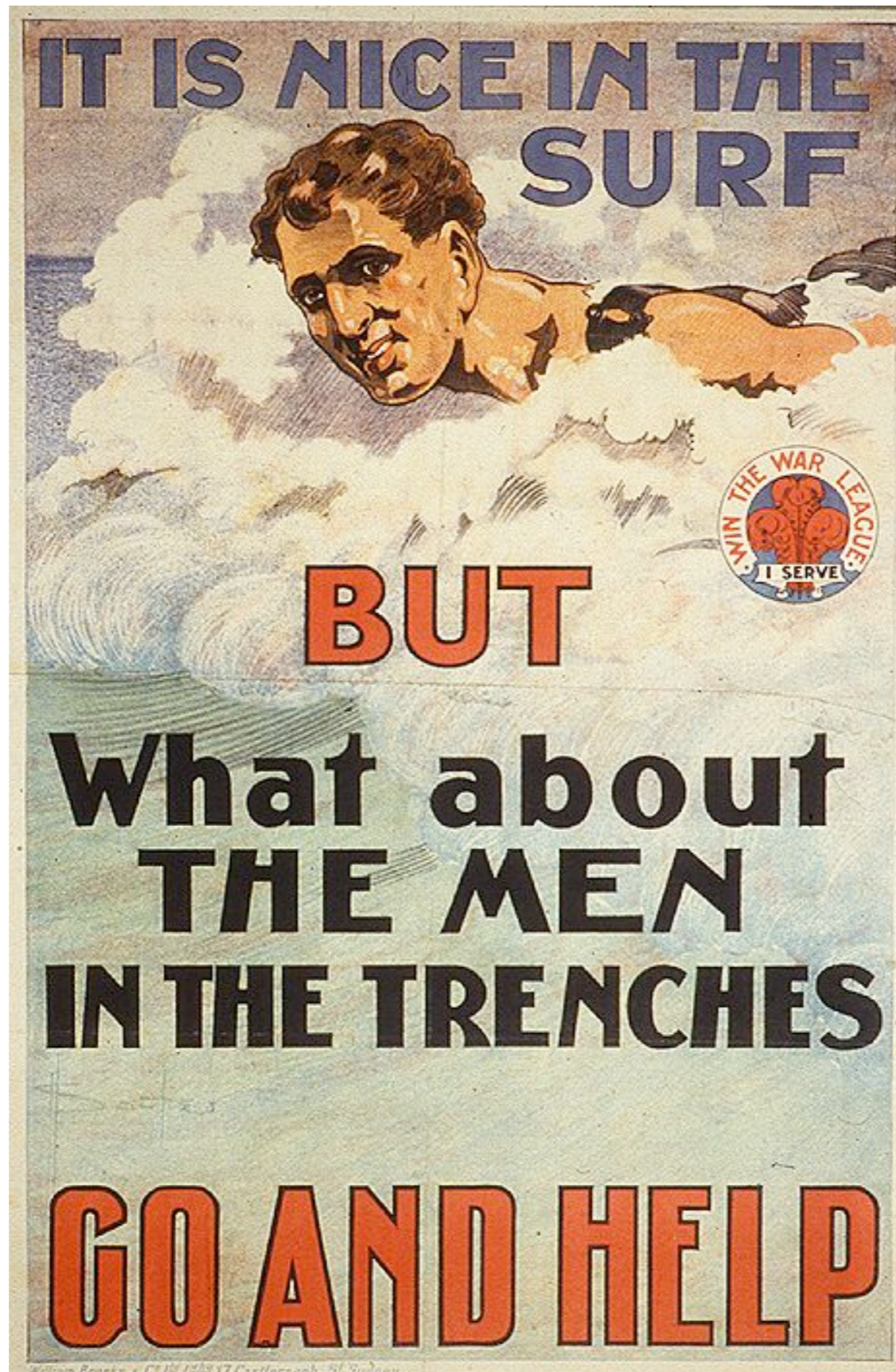
- the celebration of the warrior hero in literature and film
- the idea that "it is sweet and fitting to die for the fatherland"
- boys become "men" by enduring the hardship of battle
- war is like a game where men test their courage and strength
- battle and violent conflict make "good stories"
- important role that public commemorating the war dead plays - Memorial Day in US, Armistice Day in UK, ANZAC Day in Australia and NZ
- economic importance of the emergence of the Military-Industrial Complex warned of by Pres. Eisenhower in his Farewell Address
- link between research in universities and corporations funded by state for military purposes (Dept. of Defence, Energy, NASA)
- high regard for the military in the popular mind



The Celebration of the Warrior Hero



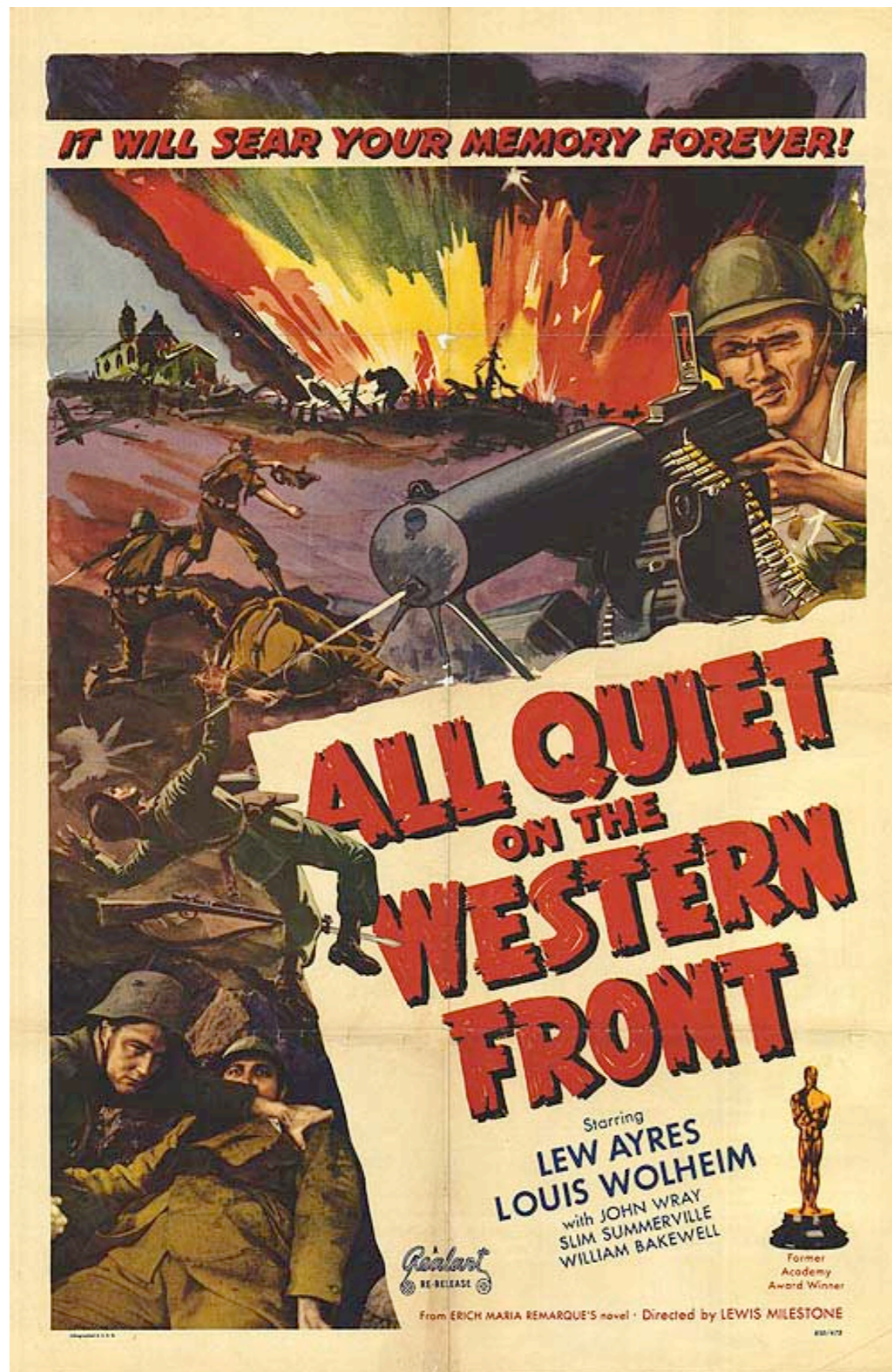
Propaganda to urge Enlistment - challenge one's Manhood



Propaganda to urge Enlistment - Guilt



Propaganda to urge Enlistment - Guilt



Lewis Milestone, "All Quiet on the Western Front" (1930)



Lewis Milestone, "All Quiet on the Western Front" (1930)



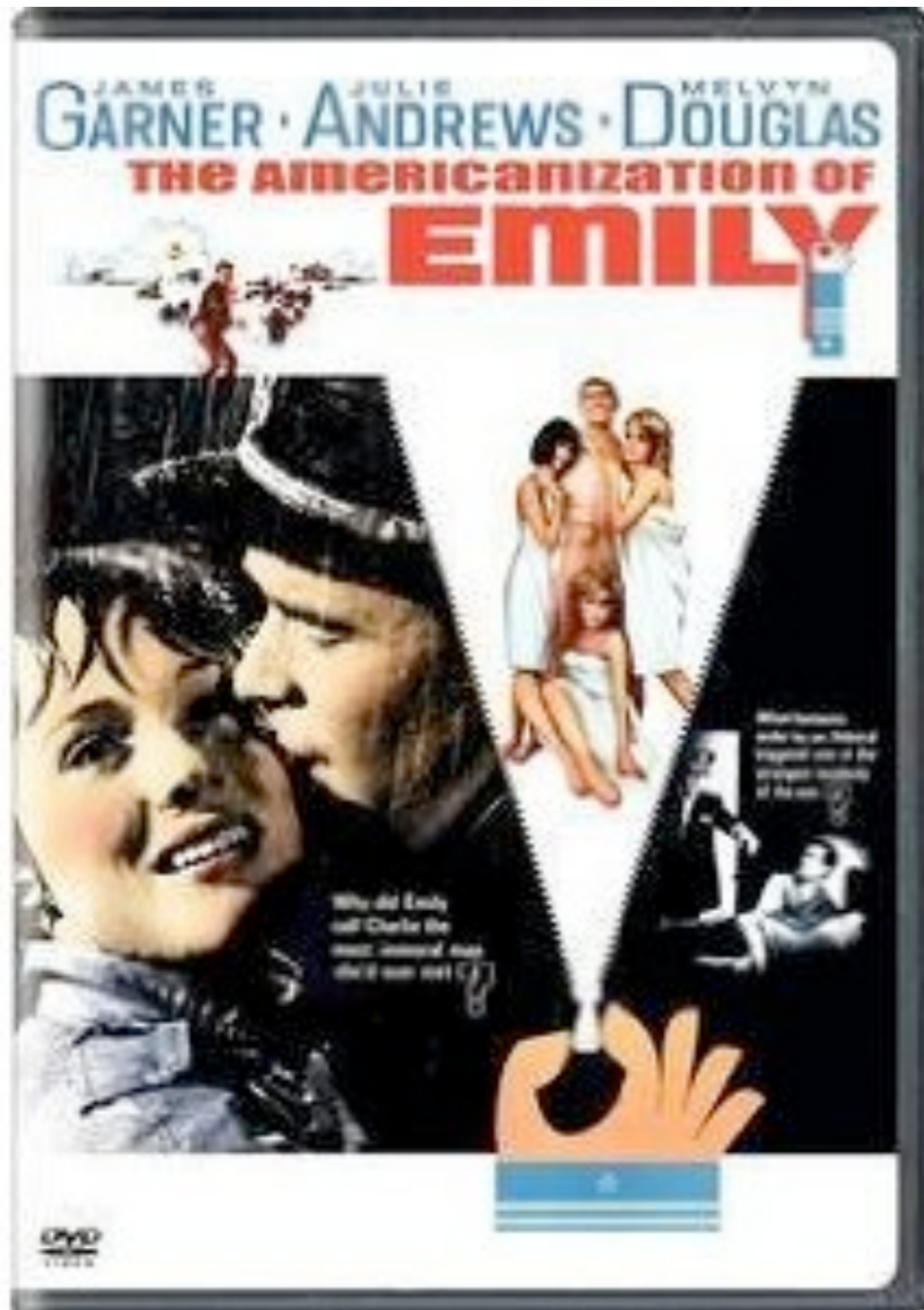
Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori - "The Great Lie" (1917)

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, -
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old lie: Dulce et decorum est Pro patria mori.

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori - "The Great Lie" (1917)



Memorializing the Dead - The Cenotaph, London (1919)
“The Glorious Dead” (Kipling)



Arthur Hiller, "The Americanization of Emily" (1964)



Arthur Hiller, "The Americanization of Emily" (1964)

Peace - Market Society	War - the Military, War Economy
protection of life, liberty, property (police with limited power, weapons)	destruction of enemy's life and property (few if any limits on power used or weaponry)
coercion directed only against violators of life, liberty, property (criminals)	coercion directed against civilians and bystanders if required (20thC end to distinction of non-combatant)
voluntary relationships (trade)	command relationships (coercion)
economic means of acquiring wealth	political means of acquiring wealth
individualism	group conformity
liberty	conscription/command society
free markets	command economy (requisitioning, taxation)
rule of law	unquestioning obedience to authority ("Zur Befehl")
individual responsibility	chain of command ("just obeying orders")
moral & legal equality	rank (hierarchy of officers, misogyny, homophobia)



Why Classical Liberals Oppose War:

Political Reasons

Economic Reasons

Moral Reasons

Why Classical Liberals Oppose War:

Political Reasons:

- "war is the health of the state" (Randolph Bourne)
 - state power grows during crises (Robert Higgs "Ratchet Effect")
 - permanent war creates permanent tyranny (George Orwell)
- war promotes "the spirit of despotism" (Vicesimus Knox)
 - enlisted men treated like serfs/slaves
 - civilians lose civic rights, freedom of speech
- war promotes chauvinistic nationalism



War is the health of the State. It automatically sets in motion throughout the society those irresistible forces for uniformity, for passionate cooperation with the government in coercing into obedience the minority groups and individuals which lack the larger herd sense...

Randolph Bourne - "War is the Health of the State" (1917)



In times of peace the people are apt to be impertinently clamorous for reform. But in war, they must say no more on the subject, because of the public danger. It would be ill-timed. Freedom of speech also must be checked. A thousand little restraints on liberty are admitted, without a murmur, in a time of war, that would not be borne one moment during the halcyon days of peace. Peace, in short, is productive of plenty, and plenty makes the people saucy.

Vicesimus Knox - "The Spirit of Despotism" (1795)

Why Classical Liberals Oppose War:

Economic Reasons:

- destruction of property harms weakest and poorest people most (James Mill, 1808)
- regulation of the economy produces “war socialism” - (Ludwig von Mises, 1919)
- the military itself is a Zwangswirtschaft (command economy) in miniature (Ludwig von Mises)
- massively increases taxation and state debt
- creates powerful vested interests which profit from war
 - the armed forces and their senior officers
 - corporations which provide the war materiel
 - the Military-Industrial-Congressional Complex (Eisenhower)

To what baneful quarter, then, are we to look for the cause of the stagnation and misery which appear so general in human affairs? War! is the answer. There is no other cause. This is the pestilential wind which blasts the prosperity of nations. This is the devouring fiend which eats up the precious treasure of national economy, the foundation of national improvement, and of national happiness.

James Mill - "Commerce Defended" (1808)



In war, the inadequate free economy supposedly cannot be allowed to exist any longer; into its place must step something more perfect, the administered economy. Whether or not one should return after the war to the “un-German” system of individualism was said to be another question that could be answered in different ways...

The most usual argument for the necessity of socialist measures was the argument about being besieged. Germany and its allies were said to be in the position of a besieged fortress that the enemy was trying to conquer by starving it out. Against such a danger, all measures usual in a besieged city had to be applied. All stocks had to be regarded as a mass under the control of a unified administration that could be drawn on for equally meeting the needs of all, and so consumption had to be rationed...

While statism sought to avoid the inevitable collapse, it only hastened it.

Ludwig von Mises, “War Socialism” (1919)

Why Classical Liberals Oppose War:

Moral Reasons:

- innocent people are inevitably killed - Robert Holmes (1989)
- the exercise of power within the military corrupts the men who wield it - Erich Maria Remarque (1928) and Paul Fussell (“chickenshit”) (1989)
- anti-individualistic
 - individuals not treated as autonomous free individuals with natural rights
 - brutalization of basic training
 - uniformity of dress and living conditions (haircuts, uniforms, marching, communal eating and sleeping)
 - anti-women (Tailhook Navy Pilot incident)
 - anti-gay (“Don’t ask don’t tell”)



...if you train a dog to eat potatoes and then afterwards put a piece of meat in front of him, he'll snap at it, it's his nature. And if you give a man a little bit of authority he behaves just the same way, he snaps at it too... The army is based on that; one man must always have power over the other. The mischief is merely that each one has too much power.

Erich Maria Remarque - "All Quiet on the Western Front" (1928)

Paul Fussell on the petty tyranny of "chickenshit" discipline:

... "the petty injustice and the everlasting grudges." That is, the chickenshit.

What does that rude term signify? It does not imply complaint about the inevitable inconveniences of military life: overcrowding and lack of privacy, tedious institutional cookery, deprivation of personality, general boredom. Nothing much can be done about those things. Chickenshit refers rather to behaviour that makes military life worse than it need be: petty harassment of the weak by the strong; open scrimmage for power and authority and prestige; sadism thinly disguised as necessary discipline; a constant "paying off of old scores"; and insistence on the letter rather than the spirit of ordinances. Chickenshit is so called - instead of horse- or bull- or elephant shit - because it is small-minded and ignoble and takes the trivial seriously. Chickenshit can be recognised instantly because it has never has anything to do with winning the war. (p. 80).

Paul Fussell, *Wartime* (1989)



The Army hierarchy.

Honoré Daumier - "The Army Hierarchy" (1850s)

30 Years War of 20thC (1914-1945)

- The First World War (1914-1918) - US participation 1917-1918
- Interregnum of hyperinflation and economic collapse
- Russian Revolution and rise of Bolsheviks
- rise of Nazis
- the Great Depression
 - The Second World War in Europe (1939-1945)
 - The Second World War in Asia (1941-1945) - WW2 in many ways just an intensification of trends already established in WW1
 - The Chinese Communist Revolution (1949) - following another hyperinflation

“Cold War” between USA and USSR 1945-1990

- Orwell’s nightmare come true
- Perpetual war (often by “proxy” in Third World)
- Creation of what Eisenhower called “the Military-Industrial Complex” – vested interest in maintaining permanent war



Are YOU in this?

“War Socialism” - The Mobilization of all Classes



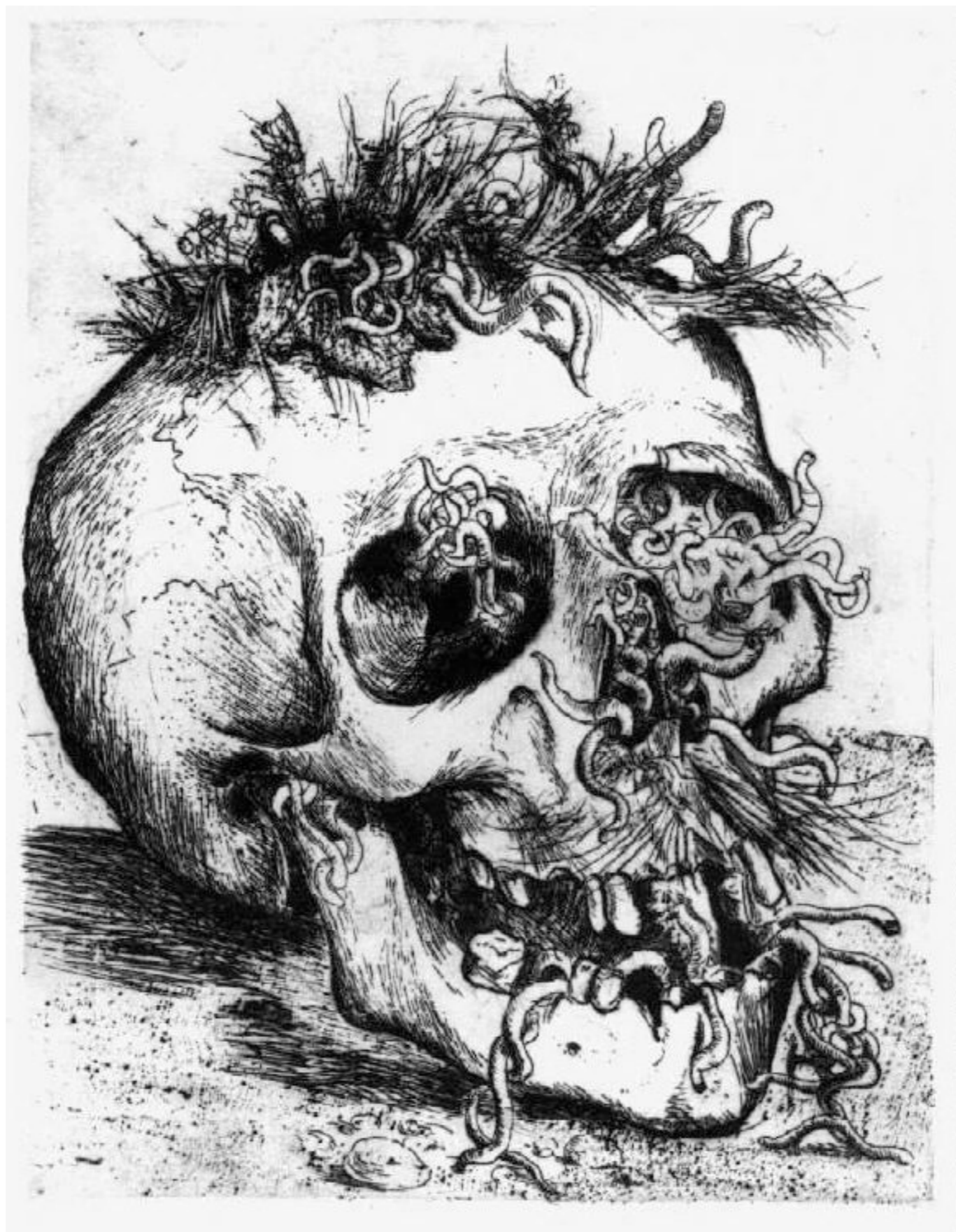
“War Socialism” - Gen. Erich Ludendorff



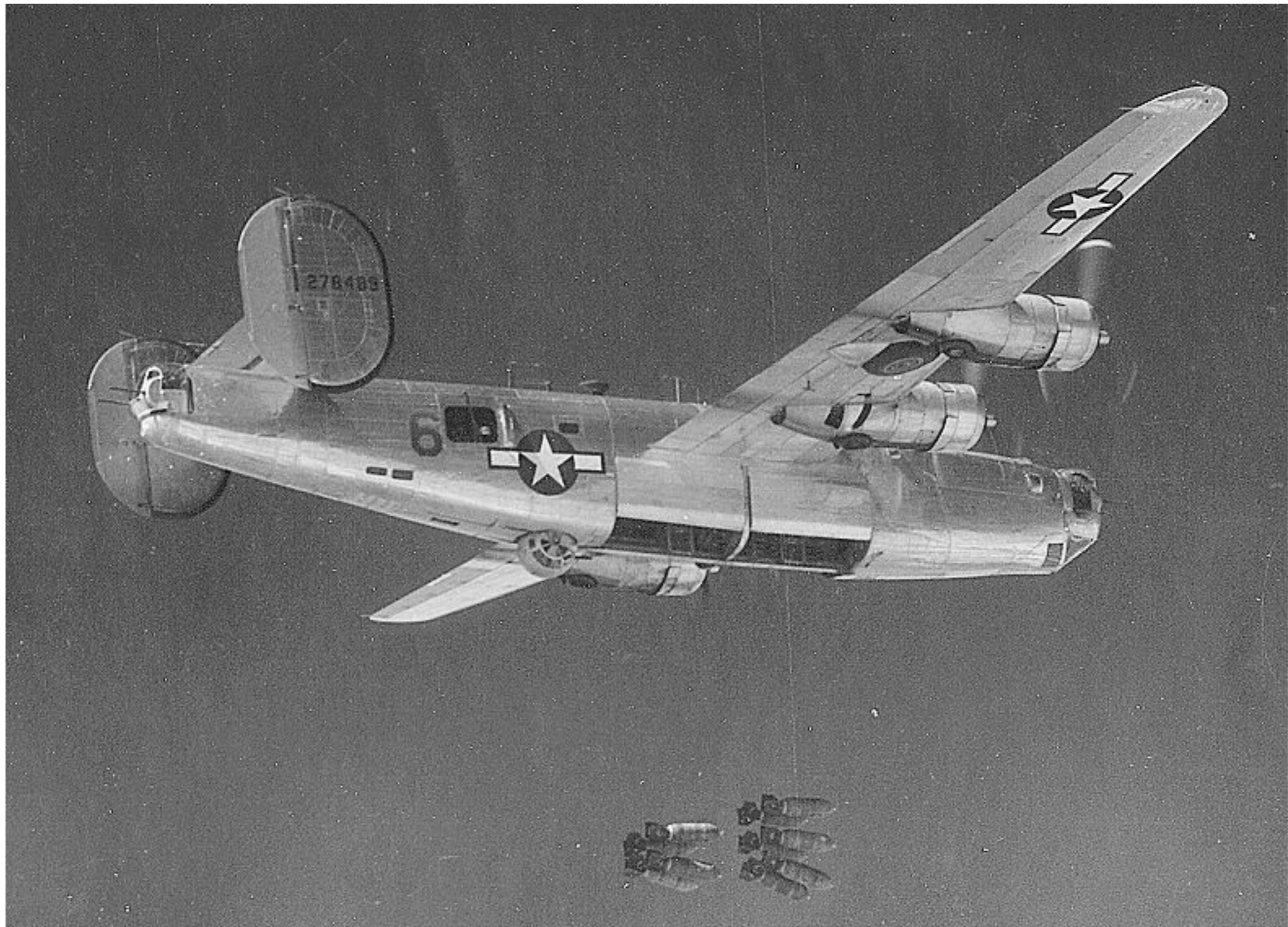
Hi-tech Industrialized Killing - The Tank (1918)



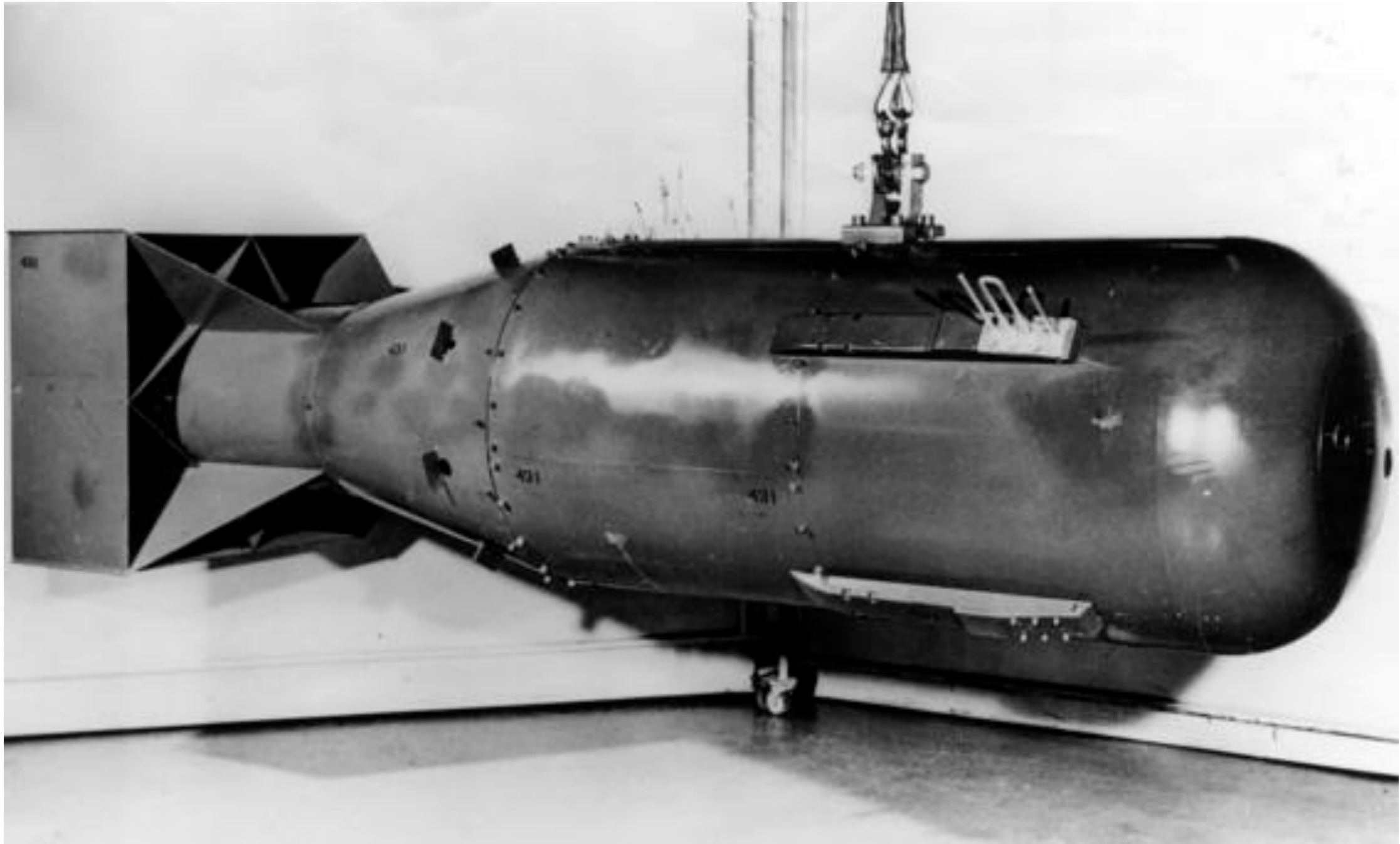
Hi-tech Industrialized Killing - Vickers Machine Gun



**The Mega-Death caused by Total War - Death in the Trenches
Otto Dix, "The Skull" (1924)**



Hi-tech Industrialized Killing - B17 Flying Fortress (1943)



**Hi-tech Industrialized Killing - "Little Boy" Nuclear Bomb
(1945)**



The Mega-Death caused by Total War - Firebombing German Cities (1940s)



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**The Mega-Death caused by Total War - Death of Cities
Nagasaki (1945)**



**Hi-tech Industrialized Killing - German Stuka Dive Bomber
(1930s-40s)**



**The Mega-Death caused by Total War - Pablo Picasso,
Guernica (1937)**



Hi-tech Industrialized Killing - Auschwitz Death Camp (1944)



The Mega-Death caused by Total War - Pablo Picasso, The Charnel House (1944)



The Nuremberg War Crimes Trial (1946)

**The Duke of
Burgundy's Plea for
Peace
(Shakespeare's
Henry V)**



What rub or what impediment (is) there
Why that the naked, poor, and mangled peace,
Dear nurse of arts, plenties, and joyful births,
Should not in this best garden of the world,
Our fertile France, put up her lovely visage?...

An all our vineyards, fallows, meads, and hedges,
Defective in their natures, grow to wildness,
Even so our houses and ourselves and children
Have lost, or do not learn for want of time,
The sciences that should become our country,
But grow like savages - as soldiers will
That nothing do but meditate on blood...
You are assembled, and my speech entreats
That I may know the let why gentle peace
Should not expel these inconveniences
And bless us with her former qualities.



**The Duke of Burgundy's Plea for Peace
(Shakespeare's Henry V)**