

“By Jingo”-Macdermott’s War Song (1878) – G.W. Hunt

By Jingo written by G W Hunt and performed by G H McDermott introduced the word Jingoism into the language and featured a rebuff of the threat from Russia.

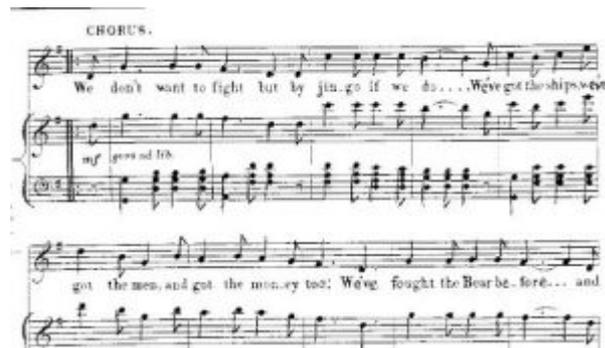


Often erroneously attributed to the Crimean or Boer War it actually originated from concerns regarding Russia’s intentions towards Turkey.

Gilbert Hastings MacDermott (27 February 1845 – 8 May 1901) billed as G.H. MacDermott was an English lion comique, who was one of the biggest stars of the Victorian English music hall. He performed under the name of The Great MacDermott, and was well known for his rousing rendition of a war song he was persuaded to buy from G. W. Hunt for one guinea. The song’s chorus of “We don’t want to fight but by jingo if we do, We’ve got the ships, we’ve got the men, and got the money too!” introduced the word jingoism into the English language. The song became hugely popular in 1878, so much so that the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII, had MacDermott sing it for him at a private audience. He was far from a one hit wonder however. In fact he had written and published several plays and acted in many of them. The war song was brought back several times by other artists and was sung in an altered version during the First World War. [Wikipedia]

A version of the song became popular again during WW1 - with words appropriate to fighting Germany - the Russian Bear being replaced by the German Eagle. [A performance is available on [YouTube](#)]

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The Original Words

“The Dogs of War” are loose and the rugged Russian Bear,
Full bent on blood and robbery, has crawl’d out of his lair;
It seems a thrashing now and then, will never help to tame
That brute, and so he’s out upon the “same old game.”

The Lion did his best to find him some excuse
To crawl back to his den again, all efforts were no use;
He hunger’d for his victim, he’s pleased when blood is shed,
But let us hope his crimes may all recoil on his own head.

CHORUS:

We don’t want to fight but by jingo if we do,
We’ve got the ships, we’ve got the men, and got the money too!
We’ve fought the Bear before and while we’re Britons true
The Russians shall not have Constantinople.

The misdeeds of the Turks have been “spouted” thro’ all lands,
But how about the Russians, can they show spotless hands?
They slaughtered well at Khiva, in Siberia icy cold,
How many subjects done to death will never perhaps be told,
They butchered the Circassians, man, woman, yes and child,
With cruelties their Generals their murderous hours beguiled,
And poor unhappy Poland their cruel yoke must bear,
Whilst prayers for “Freedom and Revenge” go up into the air.

(CHORUS)

May he who ‘gan the quarrel soon have to bite the dust,
The Turk should be thrice armed for “he hath his quarrel just,”
‘Tis sad that countless thousands should die thro’ cruel war,
But let us hope most fervently ere long it will be o’er;
Let them be warned, Old England is brave Old England still,
We’ve proved our might, we’ve claimed our right, and ever, ever will,
Should we have to draw the sword our way to victory we’ll forge,
With the battle cry of Britons, “Old England and Saint George!”

(CHORUS)

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