

How To End War Now

Released by:

The Free and The Unashamed

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Preface

This book results from the work of many people, over a period of more than a year. Some provided notes and ideas, other editing expertise and review. We appreciate all their efforts and especially that they acted quickly to get this book done.

There are very few subjects that deserve as much serious concern as war, and we encourage our friends to get this book read by as many people as possible. It is important that they be prepared *before* the war drums start beating.

The book begins below with the consensus preface of the primary authors.

The Free and The Unashamed

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How Serious Are You?

Everyone says they want to end war, but they treat the words as if they were a magic incantation: *End War!* We're here to tell you that this is hopeless. And we're not going to do it with smooth words – we're going to do it with hardcore honesty. Either you can handle the truth or you can't.

Get this clearly: 'Well-meaning' people have been chanting *End War* for six thousand years. If all you do is to chant and to prod some politician, your results will be no better than theirs. There have been 14,000 wars in the past several thousand years; catchy slogans and symbolic acts aren't going to stop them.

So, do you *really* want to know how to end war?

We're going to tell you precisely how it can be done, but we also expect you to turn away the moment you hear it. Why? *Because it requires something from you.* Almost nothing has been more common over the past few generations than people running away from responsibility. We are publishing this book for the few who will at least remember its arguments.

People wanting to "end war" are looking for a magic free lunch, and those don't exist. So, if that's what you seek, go find some Great Man with a New Plan. He has the lies you're looking for.

But, if you do the things that are written in this little book, and if others do the same, war will end, and fast. There is no question about it – it can be done and will be done. Sure, there will always be crime and small group attacks, but there will not be 10,000 teenagers marching as a unit into organized machine gun fire.

Again we ask, how much do you *really* care about this? Do you care enough to suffer for it?

There is no easy way to end war – all such promises are frauds; they offer you big results for a small cost. They also give you a cheap reason to call yourself righteous, which is the secret trick. And standing behind it all – somewhere – there is always a ruler or a wannabe ruler, ready to collect your support.

People have always objected to the *results* of war, but they have never objected to its *causes*. They've been like the poor man who wanted more money but didn't want to work. So consider it carefully now: *Are you really prepared to be different?*

If you really want to end war, read on and we'll tell you how. But if you're not willing to sacrifice for it; if you're not willing to change and to go against the crowd – to have impressive people call you names – forget the deal. If you're not willing to sweat, to suffer and to take blows, put the book down now – you'll only hate us for writing it.

The Authors

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What Causes War?

For some curious reason or another, masses of people do not want to get to the root of the secret of war. They fear the truths that could bring them a painful cure.

-- Wilhelm Reich

Almost every leader in history has claimed that he was opposed to war, yet war continues through every generation. Young men and women strongly avoid violence in their personal lives, but they will reliably march out to do the bidding of Great Leaders: To maim and kill and to be maimed and killed; in gigantic numbers.

So, how is it that young people, desperately driven to survive and to gain pleasure, end up on battlefields, hiding from bullets and killing other young people that they've never met?

Even if we take the sanitized, noble example of young men jumping up to protect their families from a Nazi invasion, what of the 19 year-old Nazi soldiers? How are they convinced to go out and kill? Even in the clearest possible situation, half of the soldiers are somehow duped into acting bizarrely.

Understand that this "50% good" scenario is the clearest scenario possible¹. For example, who were the good guys in World War One? Hundreds of thousands of boys died on front lines that never moved more than a mile or two. Nonetheless, they were all ordered to come, and they did come, and they did die. For nothing.

If we are to end war, a sensible starting point is to look at its causes. Unfortunately, it is not a pleasant sight.

¹ And if you are ever tempted to think of World War Two as 50% pure, consider that the great ally of America and Brittan was Joe Stalin, who went on to become a far bigger mass-murderer than Hitler. The war didn't only stop Hitler, it also preserved Stalin

THE ROOT CAUSES

It reads like a biblical list: Fear, envy, variance, avarice, and sloth. We can add confusion and inertia to the list, but it doesn't go much further than that. The road to war begins in us.

Fear

The new politician scares you into authorizing his new program that will "keep our free people safe." You are cowardly and obey his ads, voting for the newest brick in the road to the politician's arrogance and power.

The ruler will always try to scare people. Take a look at any election; the politicians fall all over themselves trying to make you afraid of their opponent. *And it works!* Negative ads win elections – again and again and again.

So, fear moves the masses and empowers the ruler. Then, as the cowardly cave-in, an ever-larger and more arrogant control structure takes shape.

As this happens, no one can comply with the state's regulations without wasting vast amounts of time. Prices go up, the busses and trains don't run on time, the poorest are shoved downward and the glass ceiling above the middle class becomes thicker. At the same time, the rich are hated even more and rush to protect themselves by partnering with the government.

At the end of the line, the government is not only arrogant, but is expected to solve every ill, which it cannot. Now, think of the most arrogant kid you knew in high school; what happened when people expected this kid to do things beyond his ability? That's right, he lashed out at others. When kids do that, we call it a scuffle; when governments do it, we call it war.

Envy

You can't stand it that other people have more than you do. You become a sucker for any politician who agrees with you (but in an ever-so-righteous way) and promises to hurt the rich guys for you.

Sure, he has to accuse them of some sort of sin first – the two of you don't want to be openly envious. So, the politician exposes the sins of the rich, and the people cheer as he makes new laws against them.

The rich, of course, scramble for ways to quietly protect themselves. So, they pay off as many politicians as are required, making the politicians into covert sellers of favors.

Who, really, is the corruptor of the system? Is anyone clean?

The politician is thus turned into a whore, and a stunningly pompous, self righteous whore at that. And we are surprised that such people redirect their eager subjects' envy to outsiders?

Variance

You have come to think of yourself as a member of a class or group. (Middle Class, Union, Black, Jewish, Latin, Catholic, whatever.) Your group elects politicians to take care of your interests. The other groups elect their own politicians, to fight against your interests and for theirs. You all fight each other for the right to dig your greedy hands deeper into the collective money-pot. Your man is supposed to "bring home the bacon for his district."

By playing this game, we have become a society of thieves. (One step removed, of course; one must preserve appearances!) Each of our groups is both stealing and being stolen from on a continual basis. Theft all but guarantees that assets are diverted from where they are best used, leading to economic dislocations and losses.

Is there any reason to expect this system of theft to be limited to the inside of institutions? Why not institution versus institution? No reason, of course.

Avarice

There is so, so, so much money flowing in and out of the national capitals of this world. And where the money is, there shall the thieves be gathered.

With your representatives controlling billions of dollars as if it were play money, what kinds of people do you think are working to manipulate them? Worse, most of these manipulators are "citizen's groups." The teachers union hires people to work the money in the capital, so do industry groups, and fifty types of "activists." Every so often, a scandal erupts, we get a look into the activities of these folks, and their avarice is exposed. How often do you think it escapes notice? And how much damage do you think that does?

And do you think the army of people who are searching for ever-more control and ever-more loot will stop at some arbitrary line drawn on a map? Not if history means anything.

Furthermore, every time you allow rulers to create money, they play games with it and end up seriously in debt to other countries and their bankers. Such debts are always abandoned at some point, and one of the time-tested ways is very simple: Declare war! War is declared, and once a few deaths ensue, all debts with the enemy are written-off. The debt vanishes in a moment, but the war, of course, continues.

Sloth

“The state,” wrote Frederick Bastiat, “is that great fictitious entity, by which everyone seeks to live at the expense of everyone else.”

There are actually quite few people who are poor entirely because of bad luck, and they usually don't stay poor for very long². But there are entire classes of people who cultivate their victim status in order to live at the expense of others. No matter how strenuously they cover it up, excuse it and even glorify it, it is still sloth.

And, strangely enough, those who pay for the victims' low-end lifestyles are also complicit! Cowering in fear of being called “heartless,” or of suffering the arrows of envy, they crumble, confessing the righteousness of the slothful and their own evil... at least in public.

Not only is the money is taken from where it might do some good and given to where it will be wasted, but it locks millions into their sloth.

The modern world turns on the axis of guilt and victimhood. It distracts from actual victimization and empowers whole classes of victim avengers. The slothful have engaged the victim advocates to steal on their behalf and the productive have become the cowardly complicit. Taking by intimidation and force pays handsomely. Why would we think this could be contained within states only?

THE INTERNAL TRICKS

People don't go along with all of this in full knowledge, of course. They are tricked. Yes, they can and should do better, but we should also understand why they do these things.

The outer actions are outlined above. People go along with them for internal reasons. (We are reasoning beasts, after all.) Here are the most common of them:

² Mentally retarded people and other victims of fate excepted.

Collective identity

A *collective identity* is a single identity applied to a large number of individuals. And, it stands at the root of every genocide in history. Once collective identity is established in the mind, the individual is no longer seen as an individual, but merely as one of a swarm. Thus, his or her murder is not “murder,” but the sensible elimination of pests.

It begins this way: You were born in a certain place, let’s say Norway. Do you see yourself as “a person who happened to be born in Norway”? OR, “I am a Norwegian”? Notice the self-definitions contained in these statements. The first leaves your individuality unblemished. The second makes you a cog in a big machine.

The next step comes when you see other people the same way: The guy born in Argentina is not an individual first, but “an Argentinean.” And when you put him in a group with his neighbors, they are “Argentineans,” not Jorge and Julia and Maria and James. They are demoted from existence as individuals, with individual minds and sovereignty, into a collective being.

Only individuals actually exist. A collective is an abstraction, not a real entity. It is a collection of entities, imagined to be a single unit. And, again, these concepts, along with their cousin, nationalism, have led consistently to mass death. To think of people as mere members of a group devalues them. It makes killing much more palatable.

Collective guilt

Collective guilt takes over where collective identity ends, by accusing a collective identity of evil. It turns otherwise normal people into killers.

Collective identity plus crisis and/or envy equals the basic unit of warfare. This is the place from which a Genghis Khan gets his first batch of arrows.

An emotional investment in “our guys” is wrong. Which group someone may belong to has nothing at all to do with the rightness or wrongness of their actions.

The draw of these concepts is cheap self-esteem. If you can make yourself a member of the dominant group, you can consider yourself dominant and superior. Or, if you can demonize some other group, they become the inferior, allowing you to look down upon them.

Confusion

Confusion is a great enemy: When we are confused, we have no vision of right and wrong, and manipulators have very little trouble pushing us into conformity. They show us other people obeying them or they make us fear shame or punishment. Finally, we are pushed to decide quickly. Having no moral stiffness at that moment, we comply. Once that point is past, changing requires us to admit a previous mistake, which makes it double-hard.

Almost all of us have been trained to deny that we are confused. This training occurred mostly in schools, where a wrong answer was far worse than no answer at all, and when ridicule had powerful effects upon us.

If you don't admit confusion, you never clear it up, and you leave yourself in an unstable state.

The answer to this is simply to admit your ignorance. Give yourself time to figure things out. You don't have to decide when a manipulator says you must. Sit down and put the questions and arguments on paper; take a few minutes to analyze them. There is no genius required, just some undistracted attention.

People who pressure you into decisions are pursuing their own interests, not yours.

The self-esteem fraud

All humans seek happiness – especially happiness with themselves. But, this esteem is supposed to come from *you*, not from outsiders. The cheap, outside-in version sets you up to be controlled all your life. Once any outsider or group becomes your source of self-esteem, fear of losing it lets them control you.

A SICK (BUT TRUE) CAUSE OF WAR

We seldom think about this, and some of us have never seen it clearly, but... *war makes people feel alive.*

The reason for this is that people don't do much living in their regular lives. They follow the pack, go to schools they are told to attend, wear the same tee shirts and listen to the same music as everyone else (24/7), and follow conventional wisdom. They "rebel" for mere moments, and probably only a few times in their lives. Most people have no real adventure in their lives and take no real risks. They sell their souls to stupid substitutes like getting loud and drunk, or maybe by getting into a fight a few times.

War makes Joe Sheep feel alive. He and his fellow middle-of-the-pack people will often seek war unconsciously, as strange as that sounds. Then, they will erupt into militant slogans and cheer wildly for the military leader. They get the war they need. It's almost an entertainment.

Here is what that looks like, from *War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning*, by Chris Hedges. It describes the conditions in Argentina, during the Falkland Islands war:

This was my first taste of nationalist triumphalism in wartime. There was almost no one I could speak with. A populace that had agitated for change now outdid itself to lionize uniformed killers. All bowed before the state. It taught me a crucial lesson I would carry into every other conflict. Lurking beneath the surface of every society, including ours, is the passionate yearning for a nationalist cause that exalts us, the kind that war alone is able to deliver. It reduces and at times eases the anxiety of individual consciousness. We abandon individual responsibility for a shared, unquestioned communal enterprise, however morally dubious.

THE ULTIMATE PROOF

People argue incessantly about which political theories and maneuvers lead to war, but there is a far easier way to get to the heart of it: *Find out from the men who created wars.*

You should ignore the political blathering of whatever place and time you find yourself. Politics is purposely deceptive – it is close to 100% manipulation, all the time. The only real purpose of politics is to get people to do what you want.

So, ignore political theory, professors, publications and dogma. Here is what the war-makers say about war. Read these carefully and provide your own commentary:

Why, of course, the people don't want war. Why would some poor slob on a farm want to risk his life in a war when the best that he can get out of it is to come back to his farm in one piece. Naturally, the common people don't want war; neither in Russia nor in England nor in America, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy or a fascist dictatorship or a Parliament or a Communist dictatorship.

-- Hermann Göring

The people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country.

-- Hermann Göring

If there were no Jews, we would have to invent them.

-- Hermann Göring

The cult of xenophobia is the cheapest and surest method of obtaining from the masses the ignorant and savage patriotism, which puts the blame for every political folly or social misfortune upon the foreigner.

-- Mao Zedong

Speeches made to the people are essential to the arousing of enthusiasm for a war.

-- Benito Mussolini

To make a people great it is necessary to send them to battle even if you have to kick them in the pants. That is what I shall do.

-- Benito Mussolini

War is to man what maternity is to a woman. From a philosophical and doctrinal viewpoint, I do not believe in perpetual peace.

-- Benito Mussolini

I am making superhuman efforts to educate this people. When they have learned to obey, they will believe what I tell them.

-- Benito Mussolini

Believe, obey, fight.

-- Benito Mussolini

What good fortune for those in power that people do not think.

-- Adolph Hitler

The truth is that men are tired of Liberty. They have a surfeit of it. Liberty is no longer the virgin, chaste and severe, to be fought for ... we have buried the putrid corpse of liberty ... the Italian people are a race of sheep.

-- Benito Mussolini

In the simplicity of their minds, people more readily fall victims to the big lie than the small lie, since they themselves often tell small lies in little matters but would be ashamed to resort to large-scale falsehoods. It would never come into their heads to fabricate colossal untruths, and they would not believe that others could have such impudence. Even though the facts which prove this to be so may be brought clearly to their minds, they will still doubt and continue to think that there may be some other explanation.

-- Adolph Hitler

If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it people will eventually come to believe it.

-- Joseph Goebbels

The point of a political speech is to persuade people of what we think right.

-- Joseph Goebbels

Originally war was nothing but a struggle for pasture grounds. Today war is nothing but a struggle for the riches of nature. By virtue of an inherent law, these riches belong to him who conquers them... By means of the struggle, the elites are continually renewed.

-- Adolph Hitler

People always have been the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics, and they always will be.

-- Vladimir Lenin

Pacifism, the preaching of peace in the abstract, is one of the means of duping the working class.

-- Vladimir Lenin

Politics is war without bloodshed, while war is politics with bloodshed.

-- Mao Zedong

Education is a weapon whose effects depend on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed.

-- Joseph Stalin

Give me four years to teach the children and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted.

-- Vladimir Lenin

I have not come into this world to make men better, but to make use of their weaknesses.

-- Adolph Hitler

Our power does not know liberty or justice. It is established on the destruction of the individual will.

-- Vladimir Lenin

2

The Structure of War

The state represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the state is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.

-- Mahatma Gandhi

There was a set of research on war published in the late 1980s, finding that since 3600 BC there had been more than 14,000 wars. This was before the Internet, and we have not been able to find the original source. But, whether you want to believe these numbers or not, consider this:

How many fistfights have you seen among the 200 people who live closest to you in the past few years?

Among the 200 or so states in this world, there have been at least 30 fights in the past few years... fights that involved young men blowing each other up and killing each other with bullets.

By almost anyone's standards, states fight much, much more frequently than individuals. And unless there have been 30 fistfights among your neighbors in the past two or three years, your experience verifies this.

States are aggressive beasts. They are worse than you. They are more violent than you, more arrogant than you, less cooperative than you. Doesn't the evidence show this?

States fight. Always have, always will. Will you really try to dispute that? And if so, how? Facts are facts. (Unless you ignore them, of course.)

You could try to find some very clever explanation for states fighting all the time but still being morally superior – lots of people will try after reading this.

It is probably true that the operators of states are of worse moral character than the people they rule. (And the fact that those people incessantly obey people worse than themselves is a bit of a mind-warp.) But, be this the case or not, the *structure* of the state eliminates or reduces the more cooperative, moral aspects of human nature.

Individual rulers vary in personal morality, but the *position* of “ruler” corrupts them all over time. It is unarguably true that states are far more violent and destructive than are individuals.

PROOF OF THE STATE’S NATURE

The publicity agents of states always claim that they love their subjects and are honor-bound to protect them. And they always claim that they are “for peace.” Their actions, however, entirely disprove such statements. The proof is in the most basic nature of states – in their very structure:

Decentralization is a superior defensive strategy.

Centralization and size are superior offensive strategies.

If these statements are true – and they are agreed to by almost all students of war – then states are inherently offensive operations.

Taking a dozen or so buildings in a capital city gives you effective control over a centralized nation. All you have to do after that is to offer the mid-level managers and intellectuals a choice between serving the new boss and death. Almost instantly, you take charge of millions of people. Contrast that with taking over a place with no central control: In order to rule everyone, you have to take control of every house and building, then build coercive structures where none have existed before. That is a very tall order.

Furthermore, the perpetual lust for unit size among rulers, from ancient Mesopotamia till now, shows that this has always been the nature of the state and always will be.

Additionally, it should be clear that intellectuals who glorify the centralizer and the uniter are in service to the state.

“I’D NEVER SAY THAT”

Think about that for a moment. Why wouldn’t you want to say such things?

The answer is obvious: Because you have reason to fear the state and its agents. They could and would hurt you very badly. And, of course, this is not

irrational on your part: Tax protesters and other defiers of the state generally go to jail far longer than killers and rapists.

Let's be honest about this: States are offensive operations, and to a very significant extent, they keep their subjects in line with fear. This is a thought you've been trained to avoid thinking, but it is true just the same.

If you ever want to end war, you'll have to get past this. It is sensible to use discretion in whom you speak to and how, but you must not be intimidated into silence. This is not pleasant, but there is precisely a zero percent chance of remaining intimidated and ending war at the same time.

SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY

When there is mutual fear men think twice before they make aggression upon one another.
-- Hermocrates of Syracuse

Sovereign immunity means that the ruler is automatically beyond accusation or punishment. There are a few areas where some version of this is sensible. For example, an honest judge cannot be held accountable for the unexpected results of a ruling. He or she is doing his best to approach justice in difficult circumstances and cannot be expected to know the future.

Such immunity, however, should never extend beyond the necessary. To leave the instigator of a war above all response is to give that person huge incentives to make war. After all, the winners of wars are immortalized in history books! Giving someone the ability to send other people to die for his or her glory, at nearly zero personal cost... well, it goes a long way toward explaining those 14,000 wars.

The sovereign structure permits war. Forget arguing about politicians and policies, so long as the structure of sovereign rulership stands, war will continue. Period.

Wikipedia defines sovereign immunity as "the doctrine that the sovereign or state cannot commit a legal wrong and is immune from civil suit or criminal prosecution." That means that the ruler is immune from all consequences: No court on earth will pursue him for forcing boys to die. Anyone attempting to punish the ruler will be killed (or at least imprisoned) and condemned as a heinous monster.

BY THE NUMBERS

Let's go through the basics, point by point:

Fact #1: War is entirely a state enterprise.

When individuals act badly, we have crime. When states act badly, we have war. In a world of no state, there is no war. There is certainly crime, but there is not war.

If that is too weird for you to consider, then you can't end war. Yeah, we've all been taught to feel like this:

Things that you haven't been taught in school have to be wrong.

If no impressive leader has ever said this, it has to be wrong.

We have to get past it.

Fact #2: States fight.

Is there any more certain fact in human history? States always scheme against all other states and spend fortunes to estimate the other state's military, strategy and wealth. They mimic the most basic, animalistic instincts.

States exist to tax. And taxes are justified by protection. Another state taking over puts the current taxers out of business. This focuses their minds on competition and threat: That is what they see; it is what they pay attention to. The certain result of this is battle.

Fact #3: The taxers themselves almost never fight.

Taxers send the young men out to bleed and to die. In certain situations, the young men are willing to fight for ugly but legitimate reasons, such as in response to actual murderous invasions. In other cases, they are manipulated into fighting or forced to do so. But in either case, they almost always fight how the state wants them to and where the state wants them to. This is not the best way to fight – it is what is best for the state.

The states have written the rules of war, and they will not allow you to fight unless you are authorized by them and wear their colors.

Fact #4: Mass actions always create states.

Any time you want millions of people to “work together,” you create a state, which will be forced to demand taxes or disband, which will compete with other states, which creates war.

If one wants to create a mass action, one must first create a self-financing group, and that is very difficult to secure and continue without taxation. Hence, it becomes a state.

Fact #5; All state warfare depends upon taking control.

The goal of war is almost never to destroy absolutely everything, it is to take over the enemy's system and to merge it with the winner's system. With no central seat of power, war has no goal.

Fact #6: Decentralization is better for defense.

At first, it might seem that a central state would overrun any type of decentralized group, but that is not the case. If there is no center to be taken, the "conqueror" has to build one, which is not easy. At the same time, the wannabe boss remains as a target, in the midst of non-targets. Unless people are willing to comply, the costs are too high to sustain.

That which supports power centers, supports war.

Even nukes only make sense where there are massive taxation centers to be taken and controlled. Otherwise, you're just blowing up a lot of buildings for no gain but terror. And people whose relatives were incinerated are likely to become an army of assassins.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The facts above are hard to argue with. Those who try, usually do so because they don't want them to be true – or at least don't want anyone to be so rude as to say such things. They attack the person making the statement, or they say that no other world than the existing is possible, that we should never imagine anything but the current situation, or some other version of avoiding such thoughts.

The truth is this: If people decided not to play along, the state would fade away, and war with it.

That doesn't mean that life will become perfect. It won't. And it means something else: *You will have to take responsibility for your own life and your own safety.*

Does that scare you more than war?

PRACTICALITIES

Most of the time, people who complain about practicalities do so for one reason: *They don't want your ideas to be possible.* They are trying to get rid of your ideas... so they don't have to face them.

If your ideas are possible, then they have to face a choice that ends with them being either a hero or a coward, and they will evade that at almost any cost.

If what this book says has merit, then they have to choose between:

- a. Being a hero, and suffering for it. (Building a better world also, but that thought is usually excluded from these negotiations.)
- b. Being a coward and turning away from the truth and its benefits, because it is hard.

Yes, there are practical ways to do all of this, but the question is usually an evasion, so we're not going to answer it. Figure it out yourself if you care.

3

Confronting Evil

When the hares made speeches in the assembly and demanded that all should have equality, the lions replied, "Where are your claws and teeth?"
-- Antisthenes

The boundaries of human life are set and maintained by violence. No, it shouldn't be that way, but it is. Whether or not we like it, it is true. There are people who will, given the right incentives, challenge the borders of civilization. They must be kept in check by a credible threat of violence. Wishing it was not this way will not change the fact.

The USSR was evil. Mao's China was evil. Islamic terrorism is evil. Real enemies do really exist; they must be faced, broken and killed. There is no magic, and you don't get a free pass for espousing "the right ideas." Violent men must be answered with violence. Forget about finding an easy way by being "against war."

Training, supply and support for violence are necessary. Either we have the foresight and courage to jump up and supply these things as individuals, or else a government must be formed to take them from us by force... In which case, we get endless wars.

You see, the usual Anti-War crowd is asking for magic. They complain vehemently about one side in a battle (always the side that won't lock them up for complaining) and imagine that all will be sunshine and lollipops if the "bad people" on that side stop fighting.

Wrong! The other bad guys don't believe in your magic, and they won't stop fighting.

Look at what happened when the US left Vietnam, the iconic war that was 'stopped by protestors.' Were you ever told what happened when the US pulled-out? About three million people were butchered by the side that no one

protested. (But, hey, they were brown people that we didn't know! And it wasn't on TV either!)

Funny that none of the Baby Boomers ever mention that part of the story, isn't it?

If you want to end war, then you have to defend yourselves. Don't like that? Then forget about ending war. Game over; you lose. War goes on, regardless of your incantations. Hitler, Mao and Stalin don't give a damn.

OH, BUT GANDHI DID IT!

No, he didn't. The British people saw that they and their leaders were acting like thugs and that the Indians really, seriously wanted to be separate. So, they stopped trying to rule.

Wrap your mind around this: *If Gandhi had been dealing with Russia rather than England, he would have been beaten to death in a jail cell.*

Does that offend you? Then forget about ending war. The world is a tough place and you don't want to deal with it. Get behind a strongman and hope that he's gentle with you.

If individuals abandon both courage and self-defense, no one but the state exists to provide it when the threat comes, as it inevitably does.

THE EASY WAY OUT IS A FRAUD

The political class, world-wide, offers an alternative to having to face evil. It is designed for cowards. They do not allow actually evil to exist in their assumptions. Hence, their moral relativism, worship of negotiation, pathological devotion to "anti-war" and so on.

People are emotionally unprepared to face an actual enemy, to address actual evil. They want an easy way out.

A few people are willing to fight the *representations* of their enemies (as in attacking Starbucks stores), but they believe everything will magically become wonderful if the corporations are "brought down," or, when the state is brought down.

The state may indeed be immoral, but to pretend that closing down one manifestation of evil will stop all evil is a dream. We all have to be part of stopping evil, and we all have to do it without end. That's not pleasant, but it is far better than endless war.

YOU HAVE TO BE THE ENFORCER

All dictators have built their power on the social irresponsibility of masses of people. They have made no bones about consciously exploiting this fact.

-- Wilhelm Reich

If you aim to end war, then *you* have to become responsible for stopping bad guys, or at least for hiring experts to do so. (You may also want to decentralize yourselves.) If you are not willing to face that, then forget ending war.

Now, please understand that with no state and with everyone becoming an enforcer, violence will be significantly reduced from the current levels. Imagine being a criminal when every person you see is willing to act as an enforcer, rather than the current situation where you only have to be concerned with a few people wearing special clothing and driving cars with special lights on them. The situation is far worse for the crook: No place is really safe and the good people are likely to swarm as soon as he begins his aggressions.

This is not just for tough young guys. Almost anyone can call for help, follow and film, or maybe throw rocks at the bastard while calling others. With modern technology, the possibilities are almost endless. But, you have to do it, rather than trying to avoid doing it.

In the end, the easy way out always burns you... or your offspring. If you want to end war, you'll have to do more than the minimum. You'll have to do the things that are easy to avoid. There is no other way.

Guard with jealous attention the public liberty. Suspect everyone who approaches that jewel. Unfortunately, nothing will preserve it but downright force. Whenever you give up that force, you are ruined.

--Patrick Henry

How we burned in the prison camps later thinking: What would things have been like if every security operative, when he went out at night to make an arrest, had been uncertain whether he would return alive?

--Alexander Solzhenitzyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*

4

The Truth About War

People who have been through war don't want to talk about it. They saw things and felt things that they don't want to revisit, and not only the blood and death, but their confusing feelings. War rips far more than bodies – it manipulates, twists and tears souls. Even people far from the bombs experience things they are ashamed of.

At best, war leaves one “good” side victorious over the “bad” side. (And it is never, ever quite that clear, no matter what the history books say.) But it also leaves a long trail of damaged human beings in its wake. The truth is that the boys who do the fighting are never the same again. No one escapes war without scars.

THE TRUTH

Since this is a book for adults, we'll give you the truth about war. In this first passage, from *Goodbye Darkness* by William Manchester, you get an honest glimpse at the reality of killing:

Not only was he the first Japanese soldier I had ever shot at; he was the only one I had seen at close quarters. He was a robin-fat, moon-faced, roly-poly little man with his thick, stubby, trunk-like legs sheathed in faded khaki puttees and the rest of him squeezed into a uniform that was much too tight. Unlike me, he was wearing a tin hat, dressed to kill. But I was quite safe from him. His Arisika rifle was strapped on in a sniper's harness, and though he had heard me, and was trying to turn toward me, the harness sling had him trapped. He couldn't disentangle himself from it. His eyes were rolling in panic. Realizing that he couldn't extricate his arms and defend himself, he was backing toward a corner with a curious, crablike motion.

My first shot missed him, embedding itself in the straw wall, but the second shot caught him dead-on in the femoral artery. His left thigh blossomed, swiftly turning to mush. A wave of blood gushed from the wound; then another boiled out, sheeting across his legs,

pooling on the earthen floor. Mutely he looked down at it. He dipped a hand in it and listlessly smeared his cheek red. His shoulders gave a little spasmodic jerk, as though someone had wacked him on the back; then he emitted a tremendous raspy fart, slumped down, and died. I kept firing, wasting government property. Already I thought I detected the dark brown effluvium of the freshly slain, a sour, pervasive emanation which is different than anything you have known. Yet seeing death at this range, like smelling it, requires no previous experience. You instantly recognize the spastic convulsion and rattle, which in his case was not loud, but depreciating and conciliatory, like the manners of the civilian Japanese. He continued to sink until he reached the earthen floor. His eyes glazed over. Almost immediately, a fly landed on his left eyeball. It was joined by another. I don't know how long I stood there staring. I knew from previous combat what lay ahead for the corpse. It would swell, the bloat, bursting out of the uniform. Then the face would turn from yellow, to red, to purple, to green, to black. My father's account of the Argonne had omitted certain vital facts. A feeling of disgust and self-hatred clotted darkly in my throat, gagging me.

Jerking my head to shake off the stupor, I slipped a new, fully-loaded magazine into the butt of my .45. Then I began to tremble, and next to shake, all over. I sobbed, in a voice still grainy with fear, "I'm sorry." Then I threw up all over myself. I recognized the half-digested C-ration beans dribbling down my front, smelled the vomit above the cordite. At the same time I noticed another odor; I had urinated in my skivvies. I pondered freely why our excretions become so loathsome the instant they leave the body. Then Barney burst in on me, his carbine at the ready, his face gray, as though he, not I, had just become a partner in the firm of death. He ran over to the Nip's body, grabbed its stacking swivel – its neck – and let go, satisfied that it was a cadaver. I marveled at his courage; I couldn't have taken a step around that corner. He approached me and then backed away in revulsion, from my foul stench. He said: "Slim, you stink." I said nothing, I knew I had become a thing of tears and twitchings and dirtied pants. I remember wondering dumbly: Is this what they mean by "conspicuous gallantry?"

This is what killing another human being is like. When you can get soldiers to talk about it, they remember details, like the fact that the enemy looked like a normal person with real feelings, or like the volumes of sticky, slippery blood. This is bad, bad stuff.

Here's another example, from *War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning*, by Chris Hedges:

And then, as we rounded a corner, several bursts of automatic fire rent the air. We dove head-first into the dirt. The rebels began to fire noisy bursts from their M-16 assault rifles. The acrid scent of cordite filled the air. Dust was in my eyes. I did not move. I began to pray.

“God,” I thought, “if you get me out of here, I will never do this again.”

I felt powerless, humiliated, weak. I dared not move. I could see the little sprays of dust the bullets threw up from the road. Rebels around me were wounded and crying out in pain. One died yelling out in a sad cadence for his mother. His desperate and final plea seemed to cut through the absurd posturing of soldiering. At first it haunted me. Soon I wished he would be quiet.

“Mama!”... “Mama!”... “Mama!”...

War cuts men back to their most basic and deepest reactions. Dying men call for their mothers. And they die with erections as well. (Yes, this is a book for adults.) These are powerful reasons to hate war.

THE SECRET SHAME

Another horrible truth is that war turns soldiers into deviants, who either can't fit back in to normal life once the hell of war is done or hide their shame for the rest of their lives.

Humans are not built for war. It breaks down our psyches. What is now called post traumatic stress disorder (it used to go by “battle fatigue” and other names) is a serious and widespread problem, but it is not the only one.

Over time, the horror of war leads many average men into acts that they would never, ever take in normal life. War far too often devolves into the mutilation of the dead and the rape of women. No, it doesn't always happen – there are soldiers who retain their honor – but it is always near at hand and ready to take over. Being faced with death and killing drives normal men to this.

This is simply the way it is. Humans do not take well to war. They suffer severe psychological damage, and once in every x times they will act very badly. Then, they will keep this secret shame for life. That is what happens to soldiers who see protracted close combat.

ARROGANT CRITICISM

If you send boys to war, you *will* twist them, and some significant percentage will never be the same again. The blame for war atrocities does not rest fully on the boys who commit them – it also rests on the people who sent them – whoever they were. If you send soldiers into war, don't act high and holy about their bad actions: Sending young men into butchery rips their souls. To send them into this, then to castigate them as monsters is doubly cruel. Do you think you'd be able to face full-frontal death, repetitively, and not be damaged?

In many cases it is more appropriate to criticize the supervisors than the soldiers themselves. Boy tossed into death pits need to be watched closely.

And, in continued honesty, it should be said that a great deal of criticism directed at soldiers is veiled elitism from people who believe that their "class" is above that of soldiers.

Criticism of soldiers is often arrogant and cheap. Even if the war is utterly foolish and the soldier's motive were less than pure, someone risking his or her life for your defense – even if that is only part of his motivation – deserves some level of credit. Don't be so fast to call the soldier names. Like good policing, there is honor in good soldiering, at least to the extent that the soldier agrees and intends to defend. Most critics toss insults from an arrogant position of safety. Standing in the field with them, their opinions would change fast.

The reason to end war is to avoid making young men face deadly, twisting combat. Those are our brothers, sons and nephews going out to face horrors that they won't understand until it's too late.

WHAT IT DOES TO THE NON-COMBATENTS

War's perversion affects everyone in a culture, to whatever extent they are in that culture. Willful blindness, repeating mindless slogans, contributing to the war, lauding the war, or getting self-esteem from "opposing the war" (even though they'd never personally do anything to oppose evil)... all are common perversions in time of war. Reason is quickly pushed away and the basest "our team versus their team" mentality rules.

The sterile, mundane existence of the "good citizen" falls immediately before the excitement of war. The good boy becomes a war-monger; the radical becomes a war evader. Here, again, is a passage to illustrate from *War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning*, by Chris Hedges:

The invasion transformed the country. Reality was replaced with a wild and self-serving fiction, a legitimization of the worst prejudices of the masses and paranoia of the outside world. The secret

internal world arrayed against Argentina became one of strange cabals, worldwide Jewry trotted out again to be beaten like an old horse, vast subterranean webs that had as their focus the destruction of the Argentine people. The external world was exemplified by the nation. All that was noble and good was embodied, like some unique gene, in the Argentine people. Stories of the heroism of the Argentine military – whose singular recent accomplishment was the savage repression of its own people – gilled the airwaves.

Friends of mine, who a few days earlier had excoriated the dictatorship, now bragged about the prowess of Argentine commanders. One general, during a dispute with Chile, flew his helicopter over the Chilean border to piss on Chilean soil. This story was repeated with evident pride. Cars raced through the city streets honking horns and waving the blue and white Argentine flag. Argentines burst into the national anthem and ecstatic cheering at sporting events. The large Anglo-Argentine community sent delegations to Britain to lobby for the junta.

By making the enemy purely evil, we make ourselves purely good. Because there is no moral clarity in normal life, we run to it when it is available during the time of war.

If we had moral clarity during normal life, we wouldn't need it from war.

War is neither glamorous or noble. It is organized killing, and derives from a distorted character structure. People glorifying "their" side are finding identity with practitioners of violence and living vicariously through them. As we said earlier, it makes the do-nothing, take-no-risks people feel alive.

Religion is also corrupted during war. It is used as a tool to get the young men into the state's uniforms and to get them willingly into the death zones. This seriously damages religion and faith, turning them into tools of conquest rather than tools for life and growth.

5

How War Paused

Following is the true story of the Christmas truce of 1914. It happened in the midst of one of the worst wars ever to occur: World War One. There are lessons to be seen here, especially that these young men had no reason to be killing each other, and once pressure to kill was removed from them, they immediately became friends.

The truce began on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1914, when German soldiers began decorating the area around their trenches in the region of Ypres, Belgium, for Christmas. They began by placing candles on trees, then continued by singing the Christmas carol *Stille Nacht (Silent Night)*. Then, young Scottish men in the trenches across from them responded by singing English carols.

Then the two sides shouted Christmas greetings to each other. Soon after, there were calls for visits across the No Man's Land in between the opposing sides. Gifts were exchanged — whisky, jam, cigars, chocolate, and the like. And not only did the soldiers exchange gifts, but some of them exchanged addresses and drank together.

At some point, the artillery in the region fell silent. At the same time, the bodies of recently-fallen soldiers were dragged out No Man's Land and given proper burials. Soldiers from both sides stood together and mourned the dead together. At one such funeral, soldiers from both sides gathered and read a passage from the 23rd Psalm.

The truce spread to other areas of the battle lines, and there are many stories of football (soccer) matches between the opposing forces. In many areas, the truce lasted through Christmas night, but in some areas, it continued until New Year's Day.

The result of this was anger and unhappiness on the part of military leaders. In all of the following years of the war, artillery bombardments were ordered on Christmas Eve to ensure that there were no further lulls in the combat. Troops were also rotated through various sectors of the front to prevent them from becoming overly familiar with the enemy. Despite those measures, there were a

few friendly encounters between enemy soldiers, but on a much smaller scale than in 1914.

Here are excerpts from a ten page letter, written by an unidentified British soldier:

This will be the most memorable Christmas I've ever spent or likely to spend: since about tea time yesterday I don't think there's been a shot fired on either side up to now. Last night turned a very clear frost moonlight night, so soon after dusk we had some decent fires going and had a few carols and songs. The Germans commenced by placing lights all along the edge of their trenches and coming over to us—wishing us a Happy Christmas etc. They also gave us a few songs etc. so we had quite a social party. Several of them can speak English very well so we had a few conversations. Some of our chaps went to over to their lines. I think they've all come back bar one from 'E' Co. They no doubt kept him as a souvenir. In spite of our fires etc. it was terribly cold and a job to sleep between look out duties, which are two hours in every six.

First thing this morning it was very foggy. So we stood to arms a little longer than usual. A few of us that were lucky could go to Holy Communion early this morning. It was celebrated in a ruined farm about 500 yds behind us. I unfortunately couldn't go. There must be something in the spirit of Christmas as to day we are all on top of our trenches running about. Whereas other days we have to keep our heads well down. We had breakfast about 8.00 which went down alright especially some cocoa we made. We also had some of the post this morning. I had a parcel from B. G's Lace Dept containing a sweater, smokes, under clothes etc. We also had a card from the Queen, which I am sending back to you to look after please. After breakfast we had a game of football at the back of our trenches! We've had a few Germans over to see us this morning. They also sent a party over to bury a sniper we shot in the week. He was about a 100 yds from our trench. A few of our fellows went out and helped to bury him.

About 10.30 we had a short church parade the morning service etc. held in the trench. How we did sing. 'O come all ye faithful. And While shepherds watched their flocks by night' were the hymns we had. At present we are cooking our Christmas Dinner! so will finish this letter later.

Dinner is over! and well we enjoyed it. Our dinner party started off with fried bacon and dip-bread: followed by hot Xmas Pudding. I had a mascot in my piece. Next item on the menu was muscatels and almonds, oranges, bananas, chocolate etc followed by cocoa

and smokes. You can guess we thought of the dinners at home. Just before dinner I had the pleasure of shaking hands with several Germans: a party of them came 1/2 way over to us so several of us went out to them. I exchanged one of my balaclavas for a hat. I've also got a button off one of their tunics. We also exchanged smokes etc. and had a decent chat. They say they won't fire tomorrow if we don't so I suppose we shall get a bit of a holiday—perhaps. After exchanging autographs and them wishing us a Happy New Year we departed and came back and had our dinner.

We can hardly believe that we've been firing at them for the last week or two—it all seems so strange. At present it's freezing hard and everything is covered with ice...

Sanctimonious politicians and kings had ordered them to come, for the honor of the nation, for the honor of the king, for patriotism, for duty, to end all wars, to make the future world safe, and so on. Then came the personal pressure: Their parents and grandparents nodded their heads in approval of the politicians and kings. The newspapers and the intellectuals said that war was necessary to preserve the way of life that God had given them. The girls had all been told that bravery in war made a young man desirable; avoiding the war meant he wouldn't be able to get a pretty girl.

The game was fully rigged against these boys, and they crumbled. So, they went off to war and died in stunning numbers. Yet, when given a small chance, they befriended the boys who had been shooting at them just moments before.



Courtesy Wikimedia

6

The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude

by Étienne de la Boétie

Significantly abridged and edited

Étienne de La Boétie 1530-1563 was a French judge, writer, political philosopher and friend of Michel de Montaigne, one of the most influential writers of the French Renaissance.

Montaigne reported that La Boétie wrote this essay in 1549 at the age of eighteen. It was published only after his death.

This is a scream, from a young man whose eyes have opened to an ancient and horrifying evil... an evil that the rest of humanity worships. He musters his best efforts to appear careful, factual and reasonable. Yet, his horror is hard to mask.

We have rendered it with no apologies and no disclaimers. La Boétie cries across the centuries. Is anyone awake? Is there anyone who can hear him?

* * *

I want to know how it is that so many men, so many villages, so many cities, so many nations, suffer under a tyrant who has no other power than the power they give him: Who is able to harm them only to the extent to which they are willing to suffer it... Who could inflict absolutely no harm upon them without them choosing to put up with it, rather than withdrawing support.

What a spectacle! A million men serving, miserable and burdened, and not by a larger force than themselves, but delighted and charmed by a mere name, whose

power they have no need to fear, and who they cannot even admire, since its power is brutal toward them.

O good Lord! What strange phenomenon is this? What name shall we give it? What is the nature of this misfortune? What vice is it, or, rather, what degradation? To see an endless multitude of people not merely obeying, but driven to servility? Not ruled, but tyrannized over?

These wretches have no wealth, no kin, nor wife nor children, not even life itself that they can call their own. They suffer plundering, wantonness, cruelty, not from an army, not from a barbarian horde, on account of whom they must shed their blood and sacrifice their lives, but from a single man; not from a Hercules nor from a Samson, but from a single little man. Too frequently this same little man is the most cowardly and effeminate in the nation, a stranger to the powder of battle and hesitant on the sands of the tournament.

Shall we call subjection to such a leader cowardice? Shall we say that those who serve him are cowardly and faint-hearted? If two, if three, if four, do not defend themselves from the one, we might call that circumstance surprising but nevertheless conceivable. In such a case one might be justified in suspecting a lack of courage.

But if a hundred, if a thousand endure the caprice of a single man, should we not rather say that they lack not the courage but the desire to rise against him? And that such an attitude indicates indifference rather than cowardice?

When not a hundred, not a thousand men, but a hundred provinces, a thousand cities, a million men, refuse to assail a single man from whom the kindest treatment received is the infliction of serfdom and slavery, what shall we call that? Is it cowardice?

What monstrous vice, then, is this which does not even deserve to be called cowardice, a vice for which no term can be found vile enough, which nature herself disavows and our tongues refuse to name?

It amazes us to hear accounts of the valor that liberty arouses in the hearts of those who defend it; but who could believe reports of what goes on every day among the inhabitants of some countries, who could really believe that one man alone may mistreat a hundred thousand and deprive them of their liberty?

Obviously there is no need of fighting to overcome this single tyrant, for he is automatically defeated if the country refuses consent to its own enslavement: it is not necessary to deprive him of anything, but simply to give him nothing.

There is no need that the country make an effort to do anything *for* itself, provided it does nothing *against* itself. It is therefore the inhabitants themselves

who permit, or, rather, bring about, their own subjection, since by ceasing to submit they would put an end to their servitude.

A people enslaves itself, cuts its own throat, when, having a choice between being vassals and being free men, it deserts its liberties, gives consent to its own misery, or, rather, apparently welcomes it.

The more tyrants pillage, the more they crave, the more they ruin and destroy; the more one yields to them, and obeys them, by that much do they become mightier and more formidable, the readier to annihilate and destroy. But if nothing is yielded to them, if, without any violence they are simply not obeyed, they become naked and undone. When the root receives no nourishment, the branch withers and dies.

Poor, wretched, and stupid peoples, nations working for your own misfortune and blind to your own good! You let yourselves be deprived before your own eyes of the best part of your revenues; your fields are plundered, your homes robbed, your family heirlooms taken away. You live in such a way that you cannot claim a single thing as your own; and it would seem that you consider yourselves lucky to be loaned your property, your families, and your very lives.

All this havoc, this misfortune, this ruin, descends upon you not from alien foes, but from the one enemy whom you yourselves render as powerful as he is, for whom you go bravely to war, for whose greatness you do not refuse to offer your own bodies unto death.

He who thus domineers over you has only two eyes, only two hands, only one body, no more than is possessed by the least man among the infinite numbers dwelling in your cities; he has indeed nothing more than the power that you confer upon him to destroy you.

Where has he acquired enough eyes to spy upon you, if you do not provide them yourselves? How can he have so many arms to beat you with, if he does not borrow them from you? The feet that trample down your cities, where does he get them if they are not your own? How does he have any power over you except through you? How would he dare assail you if he had no cooperation from you?

You sow your crops in order that he may ravage them, you install and furnish your homes to give him goods to pillage; you rear your daughters that he may gratify his lust; you bring up your children in order that he may confer upon them the greatest privilege he knows---to be led into his battles, to be delivered to butchery, to be made the servants of his greed and the instruments of his vengeance; you yield your bodies unto hard labor in order that he may indulge in his delights and wallow in his filthy pleasures; you weaken yourselves in order to make him the stronger and the mightier to hold you in check.

From all these indignities, such as the very beasts of the field would not endure, you can save yourselves if you try, not by taking action, but merely by willing to be free. Resolve to serve no more, and you are at once freed. I do not ask that you place hands upon the tyrant to topple him over, but simply that you support him no longer; then you will behold him, like a great Colossus whose pedestal has been pulled away, fall of his own weight and break into pieces.

* * *

Let us therefore understand by logic, if we can, how it happens that this obstinate willingness to submit has become so deeply rooted in a nation that the very love of liberty now seems no longer natural.

In the first place, all would agree that, if we led our lives according to the ways intended by nature and the lessons taught by her, we should be intuitively obedient to our parents; later we should adopt reason as our guide and become slaves to nobody.

As to whether reason is born with us or not, that is a question loudly discussed by academicians and treated by all schools of philosophers. I think I do not err in stating that there is in our souls some native seed of reason, which, if nourished by good counsel and training, flowers into virtue, but which, on the other hand, if unable to resist the vices surrounding it, is stifled and blighted. Yet surely if there is anything in this world clear and obvious, to which one cannot close one's eyes, it is the fact that nature, handmaiden of God, governess of men, has cast us all in the same mold in order that we may behold in one another companions, or rather brothers.

Since this kind mother has given us the whole world as a dwelling place, has lodged us in the same house, has fashioned us according to the same model so that in beholding one another we might almost recognize ourselves; since she has bestowed upon us all the great gift of voice and speech for fraternal relationship, thus achieving by the common and mutual statement of our thoughts a communion of our wills; and since she has tried in every way to narrow and tighten the bond of our union and kinship; since she has revealed in every possible manner her intention, not so much to associate us as to make us one organic whole, there can be no further doubt that we are all naturally free, inasmuch as we are all comrades.

Accordingly it should not enter the mind of anyone that nature has placed some of us in slavery, since she has actually created us all in one likeness.

Therefore it is fruitless to argue whether or not liberty is natural, since none can be held in slavery without being wronged, and in a world governed by a nature there is nothing as contrary.

If some are so corrupted that they are not able to recognize their rights and inborn tendencies, I shall place brute beasts in the pulpit to throw light on their nature and condition. The very beasts (God help me!) cry out to them, "Long live Liberty!"

Many among the beasts die as soon as they are captured: just as the fish loses life as soon as he leaves the water, so do these creatures close their eyes upon the light and have no desire to survive the loss of their natural freedom. Others, from the largest to the smallest, when captured put up such a strong resistance by means of claws, horns, beak, and paws, that they show clearly enough how they cling to what they are losing; afterwards in captivity they manifest by so many evident signs their awareness of their misfortune, that it is easy to see they are languishing rather than living, and continue their existence---more in lamentation of their lost freedom than in enjoyment of their servitude.

It is incredible how as soon as a people becomes subject, it promptly falls into such complete forgetfulness of its freedom that it can hardly be roused to the point of regaining it, obeying so easily and so willingly that one is led to say, on beholding such a situation, that this people has not so much lost its liberty as won its enslavement.

In the beginning men submit under constraint and by force; but those who come after them obey without regret and perform willingly what their predecessors had done because they had to. This is why men reared in slavery are content, without further effort, to live in their native circumstance, unaware of any other state or right, and considering as quite natural the condition into which they were born.

It is said that Mithridates trained himself to drink poison. Like him we learn to swallow, and not to find bitter, the venom of servitude. It cannot be denied that nature shapes us to her will and makes us reveal our rich or meager endowment; yet it must be admitted that she has less power over us than custom. Native endowment, no matter how good, is dissipated unless encouraged, whereas environment always shapes us in its own way, whatever that may be, in spite of nature's gifts.

Let us therefore admit that all those things to which he is trained and accustomed seem natural to man and that what is truly native to him is only what he receives with his primitive, untrained individuality.

Custom becomes the first reason for voluntary servitude. Men grow accustomed to the idea that they have always been in subjection, that their fathers lived in the same way; they think they are obliged to suffer this evil, and persuade themselves by example and imitation of others, finally investing those who order them around with proprietary rights, based on the idea that it has always been that way.

There are always a few, better endowed than others, who feel the weight of their chains and cannot restrain themselves from attempting to shake them off. These are the men who never become tamed under subjection and who always, like Ulysses, on land and sea constantly seeking the smoke of his chimney, cannot prevent themselves from peering about for their natural privileges and from remembering their ancestors and their former ways.

These are in fact the men who, possessed of clear minds and far-sighted spirit, are not satisfied, like the brutish mass, to see only what is at their feet, but rather look about them, behind and before, and even recall the things of the past in order to judge those of the future, and compare both with their present condition. These are the ones who, having good minds of their own, have further trained them by study and learning.

Even if liberty had entirely perished from the earth, such men would invent it. For them slavery has no satisfactions, no matter how well disguised.

The Sultan of Constantinople is well aware that books and teaching give men the sense to comprehend their own nature and to detest tyranny. I understand that in his territory there are few educated people, for he does not want many. On account of this restriction, men of strong zeal and devotion, who have preserved their love of freedom, still remain ineffective because, however numerous they may be, they are not known to one another; under the tyrant they have lost freedom of action, of speech, and almost of thought; they are alone in their aspirations.

Yet whoever studies the deeds of earlier days and the annals of antiquity will find practically no instance of heroes who failed to deliver their country from evil hands when they set about their task with a firm, whole-hearted, and sincere intention. Liberty, as if to reveal her nature, seems to have given them new strength. Hardly ever does good fortune fail a strong will.

The essential reason why men take orders willingly is that they are born serfs and are reared as such. From this cause there follows another result, namely that people easily become cowardly and submissive under tyrants.

By this time it should be evident that liberty once lost, valor also perishes. A subject people shows neither gladness nor eagerness in combat: its men march sullenly to danger almost as if in bonds, and stultified; they do not feel throbbing within them that eagerness for liberty which engenders scorn of peril and imparts readiness to acquire honor and glory by a brave death amidst one's comrades. Among free men there is competition as to who will do most, each for the common good, each by himself, all expecting to share in the misfortunes of defeat, or in the benefits of victory; but an enslaved people loses in addition to this warlike courage, all signs of enthusiasm, for their hearts are degraded, submissive, and incapable of any great deed. Tyrants are well aware of this, and,

in order to degrade their subjects further, encourage them to assume this attitude and make it instinctive.

This method tyrants use of stultifying their subjects cannot be more clearly observed than in what Cyrus did with the Lydians after he had taken Sardis, their chief city, and had at his mercy the captured Croesus, their fabulously rich king. When news was brought to him that the people of Sardis had rebelled, it would have been easy for him to reduce them by force; but being unwilling either to sack such a fine city or to maintain an army there to police it, he thought of an unusual way of subduing it. He established in it brothels, taverns, and public games, and issued the proclamation that the inhabitants were to enjoy them. He found this so effective that he never again had to draw a sword against the Lydians. Not all tyrants have manifested so clearly their intention to effeminize their victims; but in fact, most of the others have pursued secretly it an end.

By these practices and enticements the ancient dictators so successfully lulled their subjects under the yoke, that the stupefied peoples, fascinated by the pastimes and vain pleasures flashed before their eyes, learned subservience as naively as little children learn to read by looking at bright picture books. Roman tyrants invented a further refinement. They often provided the city wards with feasts to cajole the rabble, always more readily tempted by the pleasure of eating than by anything else.

Tyrants would distribute largess, a bushel of wheat, a gallon of wine, and a coin. Then everybody would shamelessly cry, "Long live the King!" The fools did not realize that they were merely recovering a portion of their own property, and that their ruler could not have given them what they were receiving without having first taken it from them.

A man might one day be presented with a coin and gorge himself at the public feast, lauding Tiberius and Nero for their liberality, and the next day would be forced to abandon his property to their avarice, his children to their lust, his very blood to the cruelty of these magnificent emperors, without offering any more resistance than a stone or a tree stump.

The mob has always behaved in this way---eagerly open to bribes and dissolutely callous to degradation and insult that cannot be honorably endured. Nowadays I do not meet anyone who, on hearing mention of Nero, does not shudder at the very name of that hideous monster, that disgusting and vile pestilence. Yet when he died---when this incendiary, this executioner, this savage beast, died as vilely as he had lived---the noble Roman people, mindful of his games and his festivals, were saddened to the point of extended mourning for him.

The earliest kings of Egypt rarely showed themselves without carrying a cat, or sometimes a branch, or appearing with fire on their heads, masking themselves

with these objects and parading like workers of magic. By doing this they inspired their subjects with reverence and admiration, whereas with people neither too stupid nor too slavish they would merely have aroused, it seems to me, amusement and laughter. It is pitiful to review the list of devices that early despots used to establish their tyranny; to discover how many little tricks they employed, always finding the populace conveniently gullible, readily caught in the net as soon as it was spread. Indeed they always fooled their victims so easily that while mocking them they enslaved them the more.

* * *

I come now to a point which is, in my opinion, the mainspring and the secret of domination, the support and foundation of tyranny: Whoever thinks that weapons and guards serve to protect and shield tyrants is, in my judgment, completely mistaken. These are used more for ceremony and a show of force than for any reliance placed in them.

The archers forbid the entrance to the palace to the poorly dressed who have no weapons, not to the well armed who can carry out some plot. It is not the troops on horseback, it is not the companies afoot, it is not arms that defend the tyrant.

This does not seem credible on first thought, but it is nevertheless true that there are only four or five who maintain the dictator, four or five who keep the country in bondage to him. Five or six have always had access to his ear, and have either gone to him of their own accord, or else have been summoned by him, to be accomplices in his cruelties, companions in his pleasures, panders to his lusts, and sharers in his plunders. These six manage their chief so successfully that he comes to be held accountable not only for his own misdeeds but even for theirs.

Those six have six hundred who profit under them, and with the six hundred they do what they have accomplished with their tyrant. The six hundred maintain under them six thousand, whom they promote in rank, upon whom they confer the government of provinces or the direction of finances, in order that they may serve as instruments of avarice and cruelty, executing orders at the proper time and working such havoc all around that they could not last except under the shadow of the six hundred, nor be exempt from law and punishment except through their influence.

The consequence of all this is fatal indeed. And whoever is pleased to unwind the thread will observe that not the six thousand but a hundred thousand, and even millions, cling to the tyrant by this cord to which they are tied. According to Homer, Jupiter boasts of being able to draw to himself all the gods when he pulls a chain.

In short, when the point is reached, through big favors or little ones, that large profits or small are obtained under a tyrant, there are found almost as many

people to whom tyranny seems advantageous as those to whom liberty would seem desirable.

The despot subdues his subjects, some of them by means of others, and thus is he protected by those from whom, if they were decent men, he would have to guard himself. Such are his archers, his guards, his halberdiers; not that they themselves do not suffer occasionally at his hands, but this riff-raff, abandoned alike by God and man, can be led to endure evil if permitted to commit it, not against him who exploits them, but against those who like themselves submit, but are helpless.

Nevertheless, observing those men who painfully serve the tyrant in order to win some profit from his tyranny and from the subjection of the populace, I am often overcome with amazement at their wickedness and sometimes by pity for their folly.

Can it be anything but folly to approach a tyrant, withdrawing further from your liberty and, so to speak, embracing with both hands your servitude? Let such men lay aside briefly their ambition, or let them forget for a moment their avarice, and look at themselves as they really are. Then they will realize clearly that the townspeople, the peasants whom they trample under foot and treat worse than convicts or slaves, they will realize, I say, that these people, mistreated as they may be, are nevertheless, in comparison with themselves, better off and fairly free.

The tiller of the soil and the artisan, no matter how enslaved, discharge their obligation when they do what they are told to do; but the dictator sees men about him wooing and begging his favor, and doing much more than he tells them to do. Such men must not only obey orders; they must anticipate his wishes; to satisfy him they must foresee his desires; they must wear themselves out, torment themselves, kill themselves with work in his interest, and accept his pleasure as their own, neglecting their preference for his, distorting their character and corrupting their nature; they must pay heed to his words, to his intonation, to his gestures, and to his glance.

Can that be called a happy life? Can it be called living? Is there anything more intolerable than that situation, I won't say for a man of mettle nor even for a man of high birth, but simply for a man of common sense or, to go even further, for anyone having the face of a man? What condition is more wretched than to live thus, with nothing to call one's own, receiving from someone else one's sustenance, one's power to act, one's body, one's very life?

Still, men accept servility in order to acquire wealth; as if they could acquire anything of their own when they cannot even assert that they belong to themselves, or as if anyone could possess under a tyrant a single thing in his own name. Yet they act as if their wealth really belonged to them, and forget that

it is they themselves who give the ruler the power to deprive everybody of everything, leaving nothing that anyone can identify as belonging to somebody.

Nothing makes men so subservient to a tyrant's cruelty as property. These favorites should not recall so much the memory of those who have won great wealth from tyrants as of those who, after they had for some time amassed it, have lost to him their property as well as their lives; they should consider not how many others have gained a fortune, but rather how few of them have kept it.

Whether we examine ancient history or simply the times in which we live, we shall see clearly how great is the number of those who, having by shameful means won the ear of princes---who either profit from their villainies or take advantage of their naiveté---were in the end reduced to nothing by these very princes; and although at first such servitors were met by a ready willingness to promote their interests, they later found an equally obvious inconstancy which brought them to ruin.

Even men of character could not long avoid succumbing to this contagion and would early experience the effects of tyranny at their own expense.

The fact is that the tyrant is never truly loved, nor does he love. Friendship is a sacred word, a holy thing; it is never developed except between persons of character, and never takes root except through mutual respect; it flourishes not so much by kindnesses as by sincerity. What makes one friend sure of another is the knowledge of his integrity: as guarantees he has his friend's fine nature, his honor, and his constancy. There can be no friendship where there is cruelty, where there is disloyalty, where there is injustice.

In places where the wicked gather there is conspiracy only, not companionship: these have no affection for one another; fear alone holds them together; they are not friends, they are merely accomplices.

Although it might not be impossible, yet it would be difficult to find true friendship in a tyrant; elevated above others and having no companions, he finds himself already beyond the pale of friendship, which receives its real sustenance from an equality that, to proceed without a limp, must have its two limbs equal. That is why there is honor among thieves (or so it is reported) in the sharing of the booty; they are peers and comrades; if they are not fond of one another they at least respect one another and do not seek to lessen their strength by squabbling.

The favorites of a tyrant can never feel entirely secure, and the less so because he has learned from them that he is all powerful and unlimited by any law or obligation.

Therefore it seems a pity that with so many examples at hand, with the danger always present, no one is anxious to act the wise man at the expense of the

others, and that among so many persons fawning upon their ruler there is not a single one who has the wisdom and the boldness to say to him what, according to the fable, the fox said to the lion who feigned illness: "I should be glad to enter your lair to pay my respects; but I see many tracks of beasts that have gone toward you, yet not a single trace of any who have come back."

These wretches see the glint of the despot's treasures and are bedazzled by the radiance of his splendor. Drawn by this brilliance they come near, without realizing they are approaching a flame that cannot fail to scorch them. Similarly attracted, the indiscreet satyr of the old fables, on seeing the bright fire brought down by Prometheus, found it so beautiful that he went and kissed it, and was burned.

Moreover, even admitting that favorites may at times escape from the hands of him they serve, they are never safe from the ruler who comes after him. If he is good, they must render an account of their past and recognize at last that justice exists; if he is bad and resembles their late master, he will certainly have his own favorites, who are not usually satisfied to occupy in their turn merely the posts of their predecessors, but will more often insist on their wealth and their lives.

Can anyone be found, then, who under such perilous circumstances and with so little security will still be ambitious to fill such an ill-fated position and serve, despite such perils, so dangerous a master? Good God, what suffering, what martyrdom all this involves! To be occupied night and day in planning to please one person, and yet to fear him more than anyone else in the world; to be always on the watch, ears open, wondering whence the blow will come; to search out conspiracy, to be on guard against snares, to scan the faces of companions for signs of treachery, to smile at everybody and be mortally afraid of all, to be sure of nobody, either as an open enemy or as a reliable friend; showing always a gay countenance despite an apprehensive heart, unable to be joyous yet not daring to be sad!

However, there is satisfaction in examining what they get out of all this torment, what advantage they derive from all the trouble of their wretched existence.

Actually the people never blame the tyrant for the evils they suffer, but they do place responsibility on those who influence him; peoples, nations, all compete with one another, even the peasants, even the tillers of the soil, in mentioning the names of the favorites, in analyzing their vices, and heaping upon them a thousand insults, a thousand obscenities, a thousand maledictions. All their prayers, all their vows are directed against these persons; they hold them accountable for all their misfortunes, their pestilences, their famines; and if at times they show them outward respect, at those very moments they are fuming in their hearts and hold them in greater horror than wild beasts.

This is the glory and honor heaped upon influential favorites for their services by people who, if they could tear apart their living bodies, would still clamor for more, only half satiated by the agony they might behold. For even when the favorites are dead those who live after are never too lazy to blacken the names of these man-eaters with the ink of a thousand pens, tear their reputations into bits in a thousand books, and drag, so to speak, their bones past posterity, forever punishing them after their death for their wicked lives.

Let us therefore learn while there is yet time, let us learn to do good. Let us raise our eyes to Heaven for the sake of our honor, for the very love of virtue, or, to speak wisely, for the love and praise of God Almighty, who is the infallible witness of our deeds and the just judge of our faults. As for me, I truly believe I am right, since there is nothing so contrary to a generous and loving God as tyranny---I believe He has reserved, in a separate spot in Hell, some very special punishment for tyrants and their accomplices.

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7

Parting Words

War is mass predation, and so long as predatory groups to run the world, war will *never* cease... as in never, ever, no matter how much people chant, elect the “right” people or engage in “consciousness-raising.” They are wasting their time, aside from whatever self-congratulation they get from the exercise.

It doesn't have to be that way, but changing it requires you to grow up, to stop seeking refuge in a crowd, to stop obeying leaders you know to be liars, to dethrone stupid emotions and get back to the hard work of reason.

Until then, there is no escape; war will keep killing and mutilating multitudes, and you may or may not avoid it.

Either grow-up and accept responsibility or accept war. There is no other choice, and no way to avoid choosing. Trying to avoid the choice makes the choice of societal inertia, which means that war will continue as it always has.

Ending war requires courage. It requires standing on your own two feet and not leaning on approval from authorities and impressive institutions. It requires you to take full responsibility for your own life, including defending it. It requires you to take insults from authorities and to be called names by great ones.

When something bad happens to you, you'll have to deal with it yourself, not run to some politicians to save you and feel sorry for you... and not try to lay blame on the politician to take it off of yourself.

So, do you really want to end war?

Ending war is simple, if you and others have the guts to do it. One generation and it would be gone, save for the occasional flare-up. There's no question that you and others can do it; the real question is whether you will pay the price.

So, far, none of your predecessors have come close. The odds are not in your favor. Unless you do something better and braver than they did, forget about it, you haven't a chance.

Humanity stands at the thresholds of the stars, yet we productive people have allowed lairs and thieves to waste fully half of our produce. Why do we submit to this foolishness? And where might we be now, if our predecessors had refused to comply with the insanities of their days?

An incredible emergence stands within a hand's grasp, but we will never reach it so long as we slaughter each other at the whims of men and institutions whom we all know to be moral inferiors.

-- *Fin* --