

**FOR
CIVILIZATION**

C.E.M. JOAD

**MACMILLAN
WAR PAMPHLETS**

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FOR CIVILIZATION

By

C. E. M. JOAD

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Dr. Joad has for long been known as a pacifist. He himself declares in this pamphlet that there was never a time during the twenty odd years since the Armistice when he was not engaged more or less actively in pacifist propaganda. His hatred of war entailed the suppression of much that he was feeling and would like to have expressed about the nature of the Nazi regime. But this mood, he writes, belongs to the past: the battle is joined, there is no more room for

negotiation, and even the pacifist must decide which side he wants to win. No easy terms like "freedom" and "democracy" are taken for granted in this pamphlet, and it is as the climax of a chain of close argument that Dr. Joad reaches the conclusion that this is a war for civilization.

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FOR CIVILIZATION

I. The Special Excellences of Man

Wherein are to be found the distinctive characteristics of our species? In what, that is to say, do men differ from and excel the beasts? In swiftness or ferocity? The deer and the lion leave us far behind. In size and strength we must give way to the elephant and the whale; sheep are more gentle, nightingales more melodious, tortoises longer-lived, bees more co-operative, beavers more diligent. The ants run the totalitarian State much better than any Fascist. The truth is that our bodies are feeble and ill-adapted to survival; they are the prey of innumerable diseases; their enormous complexity

means that they can go wrong in a vast number of different ways, while so poorly are they equipped against the vagaries of the climate, that it is only by clothing ourselves in the skins of other animals that we can survive. Hence to pride ourselves on any of the qualities I have mentioned, is to pride ourselves on qualities in respect of which the animals exceed us. Wherein, then, does our distinction, which is also, as we like to believe, our superiority, lie? The answer is, I suggest, that it lies in three things.

Reason: The first of these is our reason. Man, said Aristotle, is primarily a reasoning animal. He has, in other words, a mind which can reflect, discover causes, find reasons why, probe the secrets of nature, plan the future and meditate upon the purposes of life. Reasoning is broadly of two kinds. First, there is theoretical reasoning. Man is moved by curiosity and has a disinterested desire to *know* simply for knowledge's sake. The outcome of this desire is science, mathematics, philosophy, history, is in fact, the whole body of knowledge which constitutes our inheritance from the past and which moulds the mind of the present. Secondly, there is the reasoning which we perform in order to secure practical results. Applying the conclusions of theory to the practice of living, man has transformed his world, changing his environment more completely in the last hundred and fifty years than throughout the whole of the preceding two thousand.

Morals: Secondly, there are morals. Everything in nature except man acts as it does because it is its nature so to act. It is, therefore, pointless to argue whether it is *right* to act as it does; pointless to exhort it to act differently. We do not say

of a stone that it ought to go uphill, or blame a tiger for tearing its prey. When, however, we consider a human being, we can say not only "this is what he is like", but also, "that is what he *ought* to be like." Man, in other words, and man alone, can be judged morally. What is the reason for this distinction between man and nature? It is to be found in the fact that man has a sense of right and wrong, so that, whatever he may in fact do, we recognise that he ought to do what is right and eschew what is wrong; we recognise also that whatever he may in fact do, he is *free* to do what is right and eschew what is wrong. Man is thus set apart from everything else in nature by virtue of the fact that he is a free moral agent. Many would attribute this unique moral nature of man to the fact that he possesses or is an immortal soul made in the image of his Creator. It is not, however, necessary to add this conclusion in order to recognise that, just as man has a reason in virtue of which he desires and achieves knowledge, so he has a moral faculty in virtue of which he desires the good and strives after what he takes to be right.

Sense of Beauty: Is there any other characteristic which is distinctive of the human species? It seems to me that there is, and that it is to be found in man's sense of beauty. Man recognises and responds to beauty in the natural world and creates for himself images of beauty in paint and sound and stone. As we owe to man's reason science and philosophy, and to his moral sense ethics and justice, so to his sense of beauty we owe art. It is not only in his ability to create beauty that man's distinctiveness lies. Not less important from the point of view of the community is the ability to recognise and respond to beauty in those of us who cannot

create. The sense of beauty is allied to that of right and wrong; a good life has a certain beauty, just as intercourse with beauty in art and literature affects our attitude to life, making us more sensitive to and considerate of the feelings of others, more resentful of cruelty and injustice, more critical of vulgarity and superficiality. We should no doubt read for the pleasure of reading; yet it may well be asked if pleasure is all that we are entitled to expect from fine literature. If a book excites thought, if it stimulates the sense of beauty, the sense of pity or the sense of sympathy, if it helps in any way towards the understanding of our fellow creatures, if it increases our vitality, if it awakens our conscience and thus indirectly influences our personal conduct—if it accomplishes any of these things, then it has succeeded.

THE VARIOUS EXCELLENCES OF MAN

Let us suppose that I am right in regarding these three—reason, morals, and the sense of beauty—as the distinctive attributes of man, and knowledge, goodness and beauty as the goods or values which man alone can recognise, and let us proceed to ask the question: "Wherein is man's highest development to be found?" Some men, it is obvious, are more fully and representatively human than others; are, that is to say, better or more typical specimens of what our species is, when it is taken at its best. By what marks are we to recognise them? Clearly we shall find them in those who have developed to their fullest extent the distinctive

characteristics of humanity; not, that is to say, in the strongest or the most ruthless or the most determined or the most powerful or the wealthiest or even the bravest members of our species, but in those in whom the characteristics of intelligence, goodness and good taste are most highly developed.

This brings me to a new point. In order that men may develop their distinctively human characteristics, their development must be free. If a growing thing is to attain its full stature, if it is wholly to realise its nature, then, we are all agreed, it must be allowed to grow in its own way. It may require, indeed, it does require, to be trained, but the training must develop, not distort. Cramp it, curtail it and suppress it and though you may turn it into something different, though you may conceivably improve it, it will no longer be its natural self. What is true of a living organism, is true also of a human being; is true, therefore, of the distinctive attributes of a human being. Freedom, that is to say, is a necessary condition of their development.

1. FREEDOM AS A CONDITION OF KNOWLEDGE

First, as to the reason: it seems to me a good thing, good that is to say, in itself, that the reason should work as it pleases; that, in other words, I and everybody else should not only be allowed to come to the conclusions that seem right to us, but should be permitted to say what these conclusions are and why they seem right. I do not know how to prove that

this is a good thing; I just see it to be so, just as I see kindness to be a good thing and cruelty an evil one. But though I cannot prove, I can find supporting grounds for my belief.

In the first place, most of us are agreed that truth is a good thing; for the truth is something that we all want to know. Yet how is truth to be reached, unless men's minds are to be permitted freely to seek for it and are given free access to the results of others' search? That this freedom should be extended to men as of right is the fundamental claim of Mill's famous *Essay on Liberty*. It is only, he maintained, if you permit an opinion to be questioned and disputed from every point of view, that you are entitled to regard it as true, for it is only if all opinions are freely expressed and freely criticised that men will have a chance of discovering where the truth lies. Hence Mill's famous conclusion:

"If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind."

Now if you believe that human beings have the power of recognising the truth, then you must also believe that, given the opportunity, sooner or later they will exercise it; that truth, in fact, like murder, will "out", if it is given half a chance.

The Evils that have Passed from Man's Life

Reflect for a moment—and as the moment is a black one, it will do us no harm to reflect—upon the evils that have disappeared from the life of man—witchcraft and cholera, slavery and gladiatorial games, duelling and torture.[1] Each of these evils must, at the time of its prevalence, have seemed, as war seems to-day, to be irremediable. Human nature being what it is, you could not, men must have said—men did in fact say—abolish slavery. But you did. How was the change effected? By reiterated appeals to men's sense of justice, to their compassion, above all to their reason. It was so obviously silly, said the opponents of duelling, to suppose that when you had a quarrel with somebody, the best way of showing yourself to be in the right was to make a hole with a pointed piece of metal in his body. And presently men saw that it was silly and duelling was abolished.

[1] When I was growing up the word "torture" could have been included without reservation, but to-day the assertion that it has disappeared must carry with it a reservation in regard to the practice of totalitarian States during the last twenty years.

And the inference? That human beings really are reasonable. If they are suffering from some palpable evil, and if they can be shown how the evil may be prevented, then when the evil has continued long enough and they have suffered badly enough, they can be induced to take the steps that are necessary to end it.

2. FREEDOM AS A CONDITION OF GOODNESS

Most of us would agree that the goodness, such as it is, that accrues from the keeping of conventions is not worth the name. Nobody, for example, would account the fact that I refrain from cannibalism and human sacrifice to my moral credit. These things are not done in my society and I have no temptation to do them. A schoolboy who is forced to get up early, learn his lessons and eat only one helping of pudding because he is not given the chance of a second, gets no moral marks for early rising, diligence, or moderation at table. Goodness, in other words, if it is to be *really* goodness and not merely conventional behaviour must be freely acquired; it cannot be imposed from without by discipline, and it cannot be achieved by merely keeping the rules. You can make laws by Act of Parliament and you can make men obey your laws by force: but you cannot make men good by Act of Parliament and you cannot make them good by force. Goodness is something which can only be achieved by oneself. Goodness, then, demands that we should be free; free, if we have the insight, to distinguish right from wrong, free, if we have the will, to do the right and eschew the wrong; for, if you are forced to do your duty, it is no longer your duty that you do. The fact that goodness entails that we should be free to go right, means also that we must be free to go wrong, which is, of course, precisely the way we usually do go. But it is better to be free to go wrong and to take advantage of our freedom than to be forced to go right.

3. FREEDOM AS A CONDITION OF ART

Freedom is also a condition of the creation of what is beautiful in art and of what is valuable in literature. "They tell me that we have no literature now in France. I will speak to the Minister of the Interior about it." The remark, Napoleon's, throws into high relief the absurdity of trying to command beauty. If liberty is the air, the arts are the flowers of the Spirit. Like flowers they can bloom only in a favourable environment, an environment which permits the spirit to blow where it listeth. It is perhaps unfortunate that they cannot be made to bloom by Act of Parliament; it is none the less true. You can no more cultivate the spirit of man by legislative enactment than you can break it by persecution. You can threaten to punish a poet if he does not turn out a sonnet a week, and you will get your sonnets. But as the melancholy record of official literature has shown, you will not get good sonnets. Hence when men's minds are required to march in step and their imaginations to function to order, art may be expected to go into retirement; and this, as history frequently demonstrates, is precisely what it does.

FREEDOM A NECESSITY OF THE GOOD LIFE

I have tried to show that in order that man may grow to his full stature, in order that he may achieve a society which is not beastlike but civilized, he must be free, free to think, free

to act, free to create. Freedom is like health or air, something that we miss only in its absence. But its denial is a denial of all that makes life worth living, so that the spirit of the prisoner cries out for liberty and again for liberty, as the lungs of the man who is choking cry out for air. Liberty, indeed, is the air of the spirit.

II. The Free Man and the State

If I am right in thinking that freedom is a condition of the development of whatever things in human beings are valuable, what should be the relation to this freedom of the State? States we must have, if only because man, as Aristotle once said, is a "Justice-needing animal", and "Justice needs the State". Needing justice, we need law to administer justice, and the law must, it is obvious, be enforced. There must, therefore, be somewhere a repository of force in the community, which is to say that there must be government and a State. What, then, should be the relation of the State, armed, as it must be, with the power of compulsion, to that free activity of human beings which is the source of all that is valuable in human life? This question divides itself into two. First, what *has been* the relation of the State to the free activity of civilized individuals? Secondly, what *ought* it to be?

1. WHAT HAS BEEN THE ATTITUDE OF THE STATE TO THE FREE MIND?

The relation of States to the free activity of the human mind has been only too often one of disapproval, culminating in suppression. Distrusting originality and suspicious of novelty, authority habitually denounces the genius and discourages the inventor.

Take, for example, the official reception of novelty in science. There is scarcely an invention which has improved the lot of man that has not had to make its way in the teeth of the opposition of authority. Read of the struggles of Pasteur to win acceptance of the germ theory of disease—how, it was asked, could you cure diseases by looking through microscopes? Read—you can do so in Arnold Bennett's play, *Milestones*—of the derisive scepticism which greeted those who advocated iron ships—how, it was asked, could pieces of iron be expected to float? Read of the storm of ridicule which descended upon the originators of the telephone—the young men who invented this accepted amenity of human life came near starvation before they could persuade business men to put up enough money to take out a patent and float a company—and, as you read, you cannot but realise how inevitable and how violent is the opposition of the vested and the established to what is new, and shocking *because* it is new.

A similar reception has been accorded to novelty in art or morals. While officially sponsored art has been noteworthy for nothing but its mediocrity, new developments have almost invariably been regarded with horror and denounced

as outrageous offences, against the laws of harmony and perspective and the canons of taste.

In morals the State's concern is limited to ensuring that its citizens should observe the official code. I do not wish to decry the official code; far from it. But nobody would maintain that its observation, though it may be necessary, is sufficient for virtue. The fact that I keep the law, and refrain from stealing, murder, arson and incest, does not mean that I am a good man. It means merely that I refrain from those forms of vice which will get me into trouble with the law. There are, as we should all of us recognise, levels of morality beyond the law, so that a man may be a brutal bully, a woman may turn her home into a little hell of scolding, grudging and jealous fault-finding, an employer may exploit the economic helplessness of his men by extorting from them the last ounce of work for the least penny of pay, and not only remain on the right side of the law, but rise high in the esteem of the community. None of these is by any moral standard virtuous, yet each conforms to the requirements of the social code, and the State is satisfied. The State, in short, is not concerned that its citizens should be good; it is enough that they should keep the law.

2. WHAT SHOULD BE THE ATTITUDE OF THE STATE TO THE FREE MAN?

Let us suppose that I am right in thinking that the distinctive ends and purposes of man can be summed up

under the search for knowledge, the pursuit of goodness and the cultivation of beauty. Then clearly it is the function of the State to assist men to pursue these, their distinctive purposes, and, so doing, to realise their natures. How can it perform this function?

First negatively, by providing that minimum background of security and stability in which alone the mind can develop, the spirit freely express itself. The philosopher cannot philosophise while the burglar is running off with his spoons, or the musician compose while his next door neighbour is abducting his wife. Thus the existence of a certain minimum background of order and security, the maintenance of a minimum level of decent behaviour by all the members of a society are conditions of the pursuit of the good life by any. It is the business of society to maintain this background.

THE STATE'S POSITIVE DUTY TOWARDS ITS CITIZENS

(a) *To Train their Minds.* But the State has another and a more positive function. It is not enough that it should maintain the conditions in which alone its citizens can lead what I have called the good life; it is necessary that it should equip them to lead it. The equipment is of two kinds. First, there is equipment of the mind. Citizens should be so trained that not only can they read, write and cypher, for these accomplishments are after all not so much education as the necessary means through which education can be achieved, but that they can if they so

desire it, educate themselves. It is important not that men should be taught what to think, but that they should be taught how; important not that they should be taught what to read, but how to choose and criticise their reading; important not that they should be given information, but that their intelligence should be so trained that they can sift and value for themselves the information that they are given.

Education, in fact, has two functions. The first is to provide the citizen with a trained and critical intelligence, so that he can judge for himself what is good and bad, worthwhile and worthless. This requirement is of special importance in a democracy which demands of its citizens an alert and critical interest in public affairs. The second is to put a man in touch with the thought of abler minds than his own, and to make him acquainted with what great men have thought and said memorably about life. Only if a man be so equipped, can he play a free man's part in the affairs of a free community; only if he be so equipped, can he develop his faculties, enlarge his knowledge and cultivate his taste.

(b) *To Provide for their Bodies.* Secondly, there is the equipment of the body. A man who is over-worked and underfed, a man who goes in daily fear of losing his job, a man whose spirit is deadened and whose mind is dulled by the infinite repetition of the same mechanical process, above all a man who is hungry, cannot, it is obvious, develop the characteristics which I have maintained to be distinctive of our species. If in this pamphlet I have spoken but little of questions of bread and butter, it is

because its theme is civilization and I take it for granted that their solution, though not a part, is a necessary condition of civilization. All the civilizations that have hitherto existed have been the close preserves of small leisured classes. In the past there was some sort of justification for this inequity; somebody, after all, had to do the dirty work of society. To-day, when machines have taken the place of serfs and slaves, there is no reason why civilized living should not be brought within the reach of all. But I think I can see a reason why it will not be so brought, until we collectively own and organise our economic resources. Accordingly, I am a socialist, believing that the community as a whole should own the means by which goods are produced and distributed, and should organise production and distribution in the interests of all its citizens.

The State, then, has the functions of educating the minds, of providing for the economic well-being of its citizens, and of establishing the conditions of order and security in which alone they can live what I have called the good life.

WHAT THE STATE SHOULD NOT DO

But in the modern world it has become important to emphasise not what the State should do, but what it should not do. I have said that it should seek to promote the good

life by equipping its citizens to live it; it should seek to *promote*, but emphatically it should not seek to *prescribe*. Yet to prescribe is precisely what States in the modern world insist upon doing. There seem to me to be two reasons why those who care for the development of men and women and the preservation of civilization should resist the attempt of the State to enter the foreground of their lives, and to lay down for them what the good life should be.

First, there is not one good life for men, but there are many. People's native talents are different, and in developing them to their full extent they develop into different men and women, one man becoming a mathematician and another a doctor; one man expressing his creative vision in art, another contributing to the common happiness by the charm of his personality or to the common good by the selflessness of ungrudging service. Society, it has often been said, is like a living organism. Let us agree that in one sense at least it is; then we must also agree that the more complex the organism, the more diverse its parts and the more varied its components, the greater its value. A man, with his blood and his bones, his nerves and his sinews, his glands, his hair, his eyes, his ears, is a more admirable, because a more complex, organism than a jellyfish.

Now if the State is to tell men how they are to live, what they are to do, and what not to do, what they are to admire and what dislike, what beliefs they are to hold and what beliefs to denounce, variety will disappear. No doubt citizens who have been ironed and disciplined will be easier to govern; it is obviously easier to govern sheep than men. But what is the point of a well-governed society if in the process

of achieving efficient government, the society loses all the values that make it worth governing?

Secondly, the only kind of good that the State can prescribe is the worship of itself, and of a man, the Dictator, who claims to be the expression of itself. Now those who worship the State must of necessity adopt its standards, share its desires, and cultivate its values. What, then, are the standards, the desires, and the values of States? Broadly speaking, they are such as are comprised in the notions of wealth and power. Throughout history States have sought to exercise power over other States, to conquer and to humiliate subject peoples, and to exploit propertyless classes. States acquire empires, claim sacred rights, and are the bearers of historic missions, in the course of pursuing which they find themselves embroiled with other States with the result that we get war.

AUTHOR'S CONFESSION OF FAITH

For my part, I repudiate these goods; it is not power, glory, strength, wealth and prestige that seem to me to be admirable, but such goods as I have described, the free activity of the human mind, the increase of moral virtue, the cultivation of good taste and skill in the art of living. But these are the goods not of States but of individuals, and those upon whom the State presumes to impose *its* conception of the good life are forced to forgo the latter goods, which are

the goods of individuals, and accept the former, which are the goods of the State.

Men of my tradition in politics[2] are often accused of not loving their country: the accusation is untrue. I

love England as much, I hope, as any man, but the England I love is not an imperial power with its far-flung possessions, but an island "set in a silver sea", a green island adorned by nature at her most gracious and her most beautiful, inhabited by kindly people, unassuming, modest and good-humoured, and tolerantly ready to put up with the eccentricities of such men as myself. In a word, it is a little England and not a big Empire.

[2] I shall try to say on a later page what this tradition is ([see p. 22](#)).

CONCLUSION ON THE STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

I conclude this account of the relation of the State to the individual by asking two questions. First, what is the individual? An expression of the State's will? A cell in a living organism? A drop of blood in an ocean of racial purity? A cog in a proletarian machine? An insect in a social ant heap, with no end or purpose save that of contributing to the well-being of the heap to which he belongs? There are many in Europe to-day who are prepared to answer that he is

each and all of these, affirming that only the State is important and that the individual has no function except to serve the interests of the State. For my part, I would affirm that the individual is an end in himself, with a right to happiness in this world and a chance of immortality in the next, and that no end of the State, neither power nor glory nor sacred rights nor historic missions, can count in the balance against this right. Though I may have my doubts as to the immortality, I have none as to the importance of individuals. Souls are souls even if their life here is transitory, and though they may not be immortal, it is none the less the business of the government to treat them as if they were. The announcement of the importance of the individual is, in my view, the great gift of Christianity to the world.

Secondly, what is the State? The State, if I am right, was made by men for men to minister to their purposes and to serve their ends; it is a nuisance, but a necessary nuisance. But this necessary nuisance has been made by the Nazis into an idol which has become one of the greatest menaces to the happiness not only of the Germans themselves, but of civilized men the whole world over. Like the gods of old, the Nazi State is jealous and revengeful. To it belong the energies, the desires, the very lives of its citizens. It is the god; the officers of the Army and the Air Force are its high priests; the people its sacrifice. To this idol all that is individual and free and various in Germany has been sacrificed. Upon its young men it imposes a training whose sole object is to enable them to achieve efficiency in the art of slaughtering young men who are the citizens of other States, while it conceives of its welfare as something that can

be secured only by inflicting horrible sacrifices upon its own citizens, in order that it may harm those of its alleged enemies. Yet in spite of its power and prestige the Nazi State is a monster owning no reality except by virtue of men's belief in it. There is in fact no political reality except in the individual, and no good for the State other than the good of the living men and women who call themselves its citizens. It is against the Nazi conception of man as made for the State that we are fighting to-day.

III. Conclusions: The War and Civilization

I have always been a pacifist—I hope the avowal will not set the reader against me. My reasons were different from those of many pacifists. I do not, for example, believe in the sacredness of human life. Whether life is a good thing or not, we do not know; for since we do not know what it is like not to be alive, we have nothing other than life with which to compare life.

If I saw a man laying a mine on a railway line just before an express train was due, I should have no hesitation in shooting him, just as I should have no hesitation in shooting a mad dog.

Again, I do not believe that the use of force is always wrong. I believe that it is sometimes necessary. If I saw a boy torturing a kitten, I should not hesitate to stop him with whatever force I could command. Similarly, I would use

force to restrain a gangster and a thug simply because, unrestrained, their activities would render civilized behaviour and secure living impossible for those of us who are neither gangsters nor thugs. I recognise, then, that the State must be equipped with force and must be prepared to use it. And not only against gangsters and thugs! There are spheres of conduct in regard to which it does not in the least matter what people do, but it does matter enormously that they should all do the same thing. For example, it does not matter in the eye of God or the judgment of man whether the traffic goes to the left of the road or to the right; but it does matter enormously that, if the rule is that it goes to the left, the rule should be universally kept.

Never having objected on principle to the use of force, I had no difficulty as a pacifist in answering the historic question, "What would you do if you saw a German coming at your wife, mother, daughter, sister, cousin, aunt, or what-not with intent to rape her?" My answer was that I should quite certainly try to stop him with whatever means were at my disposal, and with whatever means were at my disposal I should, in similar circumstances, try to defend myself. Just as I would have equipped the government with force to restrain the gangster and the thug, so I would have equipped an international government with force to restrain a gangster nation. Hence so long as the League looked like the first sketch of a world government, I was an ardent supporter of the League.

THE AUTHOR'S PACIFISM. WHAT IT WAS

Upon what, then, was my pacifism based? What was the ground for an opposition to war so whole-hearted that there was never a time during the twenty years since the armistice when I was not engaged more or less actively in pacifist propaganda, speaking in and out of season against war and judging every turn of foreign, every development of home policy by the one standard of whether it seemed to render another war more likely or less? The ground was quite simply that war, as it seemed to me, blunted the faculties, impeded the activities and destroyed the goods that were distinctive of man and rendered the values of civilization unattainable.

It was not merely that war was savage and cruel; that it entailed physical agony in its grossest form for thousands of human beings; that it parted men from those who loved them and those whom they loved; that it used the bright talents of man for destruction; that it dulled and stupefied his spirit with boredom and brutalised it with violence. Upon all this, true enough as it is, I do not wish to dilate, for all this has to-day become as familiar as it is true. There are few of us to-day who have illusions as to the nature of war.

But though this and much more of the same kind may be laid to the account of the indictment of war, it was not the indictment that I principally wished to bring. To me it was the suspension of the activity of the free mind—in wars for liberty, liberty of thought is invariably one of the first casualties; it was the palpable decline in human goodness—in wartime all the distinctively Christian virtues, gentleness,

compassion and love, are decried as surely as their opposites, ferocity, hatred and malice are encouraged; it was the triumph of vulgarity, the lowering of public taste, the degradation of art and literature, that war entailed which seemed to me to constitute the main counts in the case against it. In wartime all those characteristics that I have defined as distinctively human fade and fail; in order that they may win, men forget and forgo the qualities that confer upon them their distinctive humanity.

War inflames the spirit, clouds the mind, breeds hatred in the heart, and pervades the very air we breathe with panic and anger. Men go to war to preserve the way of life that I have called civilized. They fight, as they say, for ideals, for liberty and democracy, for justice to small nations, for the right to live and to let live; but when the war is over, it is found that the passions which it had been necessary to arouse in order to win the war colour the peace that ends it. Now a peace that expresses the hatred and anger in the hearts of its makers cannot but betray the ideals that led them to take up the sword.

And so I concluded that though wars might achieve results which others hold to be desirable, although they might extend territory, increase dominion, humble rivals, and enhance the power and prestige of empires, although they might and did bring position and wealth to individuals, their effects upon the things that I hold to be desirable were almost uniformly disastrous. Hence it was because wars, whether they were won or lost, imperilled the freedom of the mind, diminished virtue, made men blind and deaf to beauty, and drove out of court all the varied activities of civilized living,

that I have called myself a pacifist. Whatever gains might be achieved by war, these, I felt, were outweighed by the losses; for the gains were of matter, the losses were of the spirit; the gains were to the State, the losses were to individuals. Taking this view, I worked consistently for peace up to the very outbreak of war. Hating it and hating the betrayal of the Czechs, I nevertheless supported Munich, thinking that even such a settlement was better than a European war. In September, I believed that peace could have been preserved by the calling of a European conference, and when in November Hitler and Stalin launched their so-called peace offer, I maintained that it should have been welcomed and used as the basis for negotiation. I admitted that the negotiations might break down or that the peace offer might prove abortive. But even if the negotiations *did* break down, or even if peace were made and then, because of the perfidy of the Nazis, proved impossible to maintain, still, I thought, we ought to go to the utter-most length in accepting every possible chance of restoring peace. If the worst came to the worst, the war could always be "called on" again. Meanwhile, every day on which human beings were not devoting all their energies to slaughtering one another was, it seemed to me, a day gained. Moreover, if a halt could once be called to the killing, the halt, I thought, might well become permanent. Such was my mood up to the spring of this year.

This mood entailed, it was obvious, the suppression of much that I was feeling and would like to have expressed. I was not blind to the nature of the Nazi regime. At first, I could not credit what I heard; but as the years passed, and it seemed no longer possible to doubt the horror that was

happening in Germany, it was with increasing difficulty that I kept silent. It was hard, indeed, to contain one's indignation, hard not to denounce this terrible thing that had reared its brazen front of violence and hate in the middle of the continent of Europe. Yet because of my hatred of war I kept silent, tried to understand from what causes the Nazi mentality had arisen, tried to persuade myself that if the causes were removed, the mentality might disappear. Treat it generously and the Nazi regime might, I maintained, become milder, might even mellow into a dictatorship which was at least tolerable.

THE ISSUE NOW VICTORY OR DEFEAT

This mood belongs now to the past. War has been joined, and as the emotional temperature has risen, the possibility of a negotiated peace has vanished. There seems nothing for it, but to fight on until one side or the other is victorious. Faced by this situation, I am bound to ask myself which side I want to win. To this question there can be only one answer. It is not merely that, like the rest of us, I have an instinct to rally to the herd when the herd is in danger, that I too love England, and that the thought of the English countryside overrun fills the heart with a sick dismay; more important for my present purpose, because more pertinent to the theme of this pamphlet, is the realisation of what a Nazi victory would involve. In one way I am glad that things have reached a pass at which one can at last feel justified in speaking one's mind about the Nazi regime; in denouncing it for the evil thing one

knows it to be. I have represented war as imperilling and diminishing the things that I hold to be valuable; I still do not doubt that this is, indeed, its effect. But if their continued existence is menaced by war, their destruction is certain in defeat. If we win this war, there is at least a chance that the mistakes of Versailles may be avoided and Europe given a generous peace, a peace which does not sow the seeds of future wars. There is also a chance—and here, of course, I speak only for myself—that those who share my opinions, subscribe to my values and wish them to be preserved may not wholly be without influence upon the making of the peace. But if the Nazis win, Western civilization, as I understand it, will be certainly destroyed.

The Nazi Regime

The Nazi regime is the eclipse of the mind, the death of the spirit and the Dark Night of the soul, the greatest single setback for humanity that history records. If there is ever again to be good and secure living, if civilized ways of thinking and behaving are ever to be restored to us, this horrible rule of gangsters and thugs must be overthrown.

In this pamphlet I have sought to represent as our chief good upon earth the development of those qualities which separate man from the beasts, and the pursuit of those values which only man can conceive. I have praised the activity of the free mind, the freedom of the moral will, the cultivation of the sense of beauty, the refinement of the spirit and the

amenities of civilized living. I have argued that education should aim not at instilling the conclusions of other men, but the ability to reach conclusions for oneself; I have urged that society should be tolerant of and receptive to originality in art and morals; I have maintained that not society is valuable, but the men and women who compose it and that the function of the State should be limited to that of providing a background for the good life of its citizens. Freedom, tolerance, reasonableness, good taste, kindness and compassion, the original activity of the mind, the right of expression and criticism, and the blossoming of the spirit in creative art—these are the articles of my creed, and these are also the essentials of civilization. Every single one of these the Nazis decry.

I will take one illustration from each of the three spheres of value which I have sought to praise. First, in the sphere of thought: here is a regime which has dishonoured all that is best in the German people; it has exorcized culture, burnt books, exiled artists, scientists, writers and philosophers, and made war upon the mind of man. Under its influence the great intellectual gifts of Germans have been devoted to the achievement of efficiency in the arts of slaughter, and to the contrivance of ever more ingenious and more sweeping methods of destruction. Is it any wonder that when war came, the Germans should possess an advantage in the ability to slaughter over their adversaries the Allies, whose intellectual faculties have been otherwise engaged, whose preoccupations have been different?

Secondly, in the sphere of morals: here is a regime which glories in brutality, uses cruelty as a method of government

and lies as an instrument of policy. Compassion, mercy, consideration for the helpless, tolerance and tenderness, all these it proclaims to be decadent and seeks to eradicate.

In the sphere of art, the vision of the creative spirit is denied and the artist is tied to the chariot wheels of the State which degrades his art into an instrument of propaganda. "So long as there remains in Germany any neutral or non-political art," Goebbels has declared, "our task is not ended."

Freedom in Germany

Finally, there is freedom, freedom which, as I have tried to show, is the condition of the realisation of all civilized goods. Freedom in Germany has been destroyed. The Nazi government gags its people; it taps telephones and opens letters; it sets spies and eavesdroppers to overhear and report upon the most casual conversation; it plants its secret police and their creatures in cafés, restaurants, shops and even private households to arrest its citizens and imprison them without trial, or after a trial in a party court for offences hitherto unknown to any code of law; it toils and tortures its intellectuals to death in concentration camps; it forces its unfortunate victims to suppress at every moment the normal workings of the human intellect and the natural pulsations of the human heart. Under this regime everybody must do and think as their rulers bid them, under pain of the most savage penalties if they refuse. And what do their rulers bid them? To denounce freedom and glorify oppression, to hate peace

and to praise war, to renounce truth and to worship lies. It is because these things constitute the denial of civilization that, if civilization is to survive, the Nazis must be beaten. A Nazi victory would usher in a new Dark Age for Europe, an age in which the mind of man would go into prison and the spirit of man into retreat. If civilization survived at all, it would survive in holes and corners in daily peril of its existence. Perhaps there would be retreats in which men would gather to keep alive something of the old values and the old culture, as the monks kept alive the remnants of the Græco-Roman civilization after the invasion of the barbarians and the sack of Rome. But such retreats cannot, I submit, establish themselves in a continent dominated by the Nazis.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF DEFEAT

For the defeat of the Allies in this war would bring consequences very different from those which have attended the defeat of nations in other wars. In previous wars a defeated nation has lost territory, has been mulcted of a heavy indemnity, has been shorn of power and robbed of prestige; but there has been no serious interference with its people's way of life. Thus the defeats of France in 1815 and again in 1870 were the prelude to the most active periods of French civilization. Anxious to forget the sufferings and disasters of war, Frenchmen turned to the cultivation of the mind and the spirit. But a Nazi victory would not permit such cultivation. A Nazi victory would deprive us of our empire, rob us of our wealth, take from us our economic controls,

and lower our standards of living. But this is not all, and it is not the worst. If the Nazis won this war, they would establish in England a puppet government supported by a servile parliament; they would control the Press; they would censor books and periodicals; they would enslave the working class, depriving them of those rights and safeguards against exploitation which have been won during a hundred and fifty years of struggle. The liberties of our democracy, that a man should not be imprisoned without a trial, that he should be tried by a jury of his peers, that he should be sentenced by an impartial judiciary, that he should make the laws through his representatives elected by secret ballot—in a word the whole body of democratic forms and institutions for which our fathers struggled so hard and so long and at last established, all would disappear from England as utterly and, it may be, as irretrievably as they have already disappeared from Germany. This, then, is veritably a war for civilization.

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[The end of *For Civilization* by C. E. M. (Cyril Edwin Mitchinson) Joad]