

GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE

The Seeds of War

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PART I

To those citizens who would honestly try to make this the last war, a question arises which must be squarely answered before one intelligent step toward cooperation between peoples may be taken. Until it is truthfully answered and its implications put into effect we must, if we are not ostriches, recognize the fact that this is neither the greatest nor the last war.

When—and that day may yet be far off—when the answer to this question is fully comprehended by a sufficient number of thinking men, wars will be as impossible as is peace today! Why do men make war? If we would put a stop to the struggles—individual and collective, civil and military, between individuals and between nations, we must understand the factors that bring us into conflict with our fellow beings, for only through such understanding may we hope to remove the causes.

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War is the most horrible disease conceived by the brain of man. It is the cancer of cancers. It is the negation of everything positive and good. It is a ravaging tuberculosis which, while apparently arrested in one part of the social body, breaks out with devastating fury in another. It is a disease which for suffering and misery, for indiscriminate blighting and blotting has no rival in the world. The carnage of the wolf among sheep, of the grizzly among cattle, of the Bengal tiger among swine, is a jungle creed of survival of the species.

All around us we see the eternal struggle, the young devouring the old, the strong the weak, the minnow eating the larva, while the larger fish pursues the minnow, the starfish prying open the oyster and in turn filling the belly of the sand shark. Everywhere we look we see the struggle, but everywhere it is the struggle between species, not within the species. Ants do not make war on their own kind. If they fight it is over disharmony of interests and that is because of difference in kind. Look in nature where we will, we cannot find the lower animals fighting and killing themselves as we find in man—the highest.

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Is war natural? Did God intend it? What is this strange virus that is carried in the very milk of nations that turns brother against brother, father against son; that in civil society fills our prisons with criminals, our asylums with the insane, our almshouses with the old and poor?

What is it that convulses the nations of the world in what we call hard times and depressions when millions of those who would fill their bellies stand shivering in the bread lines? What is it that makes man, the creature made in the image and likeness of his Maker turn his hand against his brother? Is it language that is the seed for strife? Is the German to be feared because of his guttural tongue? Is it the kind of government that plants the seed for strife? Were the free cities of Greece less warlike than the satrapies of the great king? Was the Rome of the tribunes and senate less warlike and bloodthirsty than the Rome of the Caesarian tyrants? Was Germany to be less feared under her National Socialism than under the frowning Kaiser? Is it religion? Because the orientals have a Light Shower named Brahma, or Buddha, or Sidaruthar, because the Hebrew is guided by his Moses and Prophets, the Moslem by his Mohamet, or the Christian by his Saviour—is it religious difference that has drenched the world in blood? Were the Crusaders motivated solely by the desire to convert or to secure Jerusalem? Can it be that food and dress have precipitated bloodshed among nations? Should we blame the constellations overhead, the wobbling of the earth on its axis or the sun spots for our struggles?

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Anthropologists tell us that young nations having more men than women will make war to capture women, and at a time millenniums back and among small bands such as the Biblical Hebrews and savage nomads in the hinterlands this may be true, but today in this glimmering of understanding there are few indeed who would challenge that the greatest single cause for strife or war is due to the unequal distribution of wealth.

Whether it is between bootblack and the bank president in our city or between the troops of this nation that are locked in deadly conflict with the troops of other nations,

the cause of the struggle is the same. Most men do not get what they earn while other men get what they do not earn.

It is this unequal distribution of wealth which is the seed of war.

It is this unequal distribution of wealth which enabled the Japanese Diet to claim that the country was vastly overpopulated, while actually it is only half as densely populated as England. In Franco Spain 50,000 landlords own more than half of the country with a population of 24,000,000. In Germany tens of millions own no land whatever and in Italy one-half of one per cent of the landowners possess 47 per cent of all the cultivated land—a nation where 40 million out of 43 million own no land at all. In every case we have heard the same cry. War must be waged, territory annexed to provide for the overpopulation at home.

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But how can a nation such as Italy fall to such a level of unequal distribution? How could the Rome of old before she vanished fall to such a level that 1,800 men owned the then known world?

If we have unequal distribution of wealth it must be with the authority and approval of governments and people. What then are the governmental levers by which unequal distribution of wealth may so upset the balance between men and nations that struggles and bloodshed have become the accustomed method of rearranging our civilized imbalances? How can it be that when the exchange of work is the law of social existence we have an unequal distribution?

The exchange of work is trade and where men trade fairly cooperation and not war is the order.

If such is true then may it not be that trade balances between countries may contribute to the cause of war? Assuming that trade and tariffs may be closely linked to war this column will discuss the fundamental difference between the Democratic and Republican parties and the implications of the Reciprocal Trade Treaties instituted by this administration.