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GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE

The Seeds of War

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Part 14

In thirteen previous articles I briefly exploded the protective tariff theory as a means of benefit to nations and showed how in reality it is one of the most important of the seeds of war.

Now I propose to go further into the inquiry of what causes war among civilized nations.

But before doing so it is necessary for the reader to ask himself one question, "How badly do I want to avert another war?"

For in spite of all the articles in the press, all the politicians' fine speeches and the clergy's prayers, wars will be brought about by economic maladjustments, and these maladjustments must be solved by each and every one of us.

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We may not like to admit it but our attitude toward our underprivileged race the Negro is of the same warp and woof as the British problem of India, and while we are quick to criticize Britain's rapacity and imperialism we refuse to recognize our own intolerances or do anything about them. If we would really make a permanent peace for the world we must first put our own house to order. And to find how far we are away from any permanent peace but ask the privileged few here in America to give up their privileges for the benefit of the many. If here at home we cannot trust each other how can the rest of the world be expected to do better?

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For example, we have in this investigation torn down the entire protective tariff philosophy. Yet, when there is no shred of reason or morsel of justice to perpetuate the system, the protectionist will make the plea that since capital has been invested and industry organized upon the basis of protection, it would be unwise, injurious and unjust to abolish protective tariffs all at once and that their reduction must be gradual and painless. And again the short sighted labor leaders, not daring to think for themselves have subscribed to these pleas. How can they do so? If protection is unjust, if it is a denial of equal rights that permits a few to tax the many, then to continue such a system is to continue an injustice, and no matter how much capital is invested it remains a social wrong. The doctrine to which we give only lip service is enunciated in our Declaration of Independence.

It is the self evident truth that men are endowed by their Creator with unalienable and equal rights, and that any law or institution that denies or impairs this natural equality may at any time be altered or abolished. If capitalism is to serve it is time that it learns this lesson: The man who traffics upon the ignorance or the enslavement of a people does so at his own peril. That this lesson is being learned the hard way is attested by the tumbling thrones of Europe.

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But, we are told, free trade must be brought about gradually, that an immediate change would convulse the economic status of the nation and of the world! But are we not now going through a world convulsion which is dragging out over the years with no prospect of cessation? To abolish protection at once is the only way in which the protected industries can be fairly treated. For, if we abolish protection slowly, the great industries will, like the strongest rats, crowd out the lesser in their effort to preserve themselves. But more important still, if protection is gradually reduced there will be a long period of uncertainty, of insecurity, and business depressions.

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If we have to face a shock might it not be better to get it at once and over with as to prolong the agony. Why amputate the limb an inch at a time when we know the entire limb must come off. What is the effect on the laboring classes? If there has to be a change it is better for the poor people if it is sudden and short for it does not give the strong and wealthy time to avoid it at the expense of the workers. If a flood were to strike the city tomorrow all would suffer alike, but if there was an hours warning it would be the powerful and rich who could and would commandeer the means

ral ceremonies in Washington yesterday. We are confident we shall hear an interesting report of the affair when the Lieutenant Governor and party return home.

of escape for themselves and their possessions.

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If the abolition of protection is certain to disrupt trade and industry, then it is better for all and especially it is better for the great masses of laboring people that the change be short and sharp. But all of this is only the dire threat of what will happen were we to apply Free Trade and allow men to buy and sell as their best interest dictates. Instead of the business collapse with which we are threatened and which many thinking men accept as inevitable with the dropping of the tariffs we should have an enormous stimulus to business of every description. The rings, trusts, pools or holding companies would be broken up, not by Sherman Acts at great expense and over a long time, but spontaneously by the diversified demands which would distribute the wealth to all men who work.

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If we really don't want war then we must be ready to meet, not the Ethiopian, or Hungarian, or Chinaman or Hotentot on equal terms. That will come later. We must be ready to give our brother, in the house down the street a square deal.

We must be ready to actually live for what Washington and Jefferson died for—a nation where all men have equal and unalienable rights. Thus far only a few have shown a willingness to do what must be done and until there are more we will have wars and bloodshed and sorrow and neither Holy Alliances, nor Atlantic Charters, nor International Houses, nor Boy Scouts will suffice. Until we put into practice the Master's words "Do unto others as ye would be done by!" we shall suffer.