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GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE

The Seeds of War

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Part 15

**B**ECAUSE I hate war and every-thing connected with it I have tried to acquaint the reader with the factors that make wars the inevitable result of our way of life.

In so doing I have analyzed the protective theory, exploding its basic tenets, proving it to be an injustice. And injustice is the father of strife whether individual, national or international. If there are readers who still differ as to the menace, injustice and inadvisability in protective tariffs, I hope they will unlimber their pens, for it is only by publicly discussing the principles we advocate that their strength or weakness may be discovered.

Now, while we have proven the inadequacy of protective tariffs to benefit our people, let us not fall into the common error of accepting free trade as the panacea that will make wars the possibilities of past ages.

Let us rather examine the free trade theory and discover why it has never been universally accepted or where accepted why it did not elevate man to something better than the self appointed executioner of his brother.

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In disproving the protective theory we have proven the need for free trade. Why, then, do we not have free trade? The real free-traders will assure you that it is popular ignorance and the special privileged who have preserved the tariff frontier, and there is much to be said upon this point.

But does this go far enough? We have proven that it is the tendency of tariffs to make labor less productive, to make the commodity more scarce, to make each man mistrust his neighbor, not because he wants to, but because it becomes an economic necessity.

By disproving the one theory we prove the other—that the general tendency of free trade is to make labor more productive, to make the article more readily secured, to draw closer the bonds of common fellowship and mutual interest.

But as water diverted from the irrigation ditch never reaches the intended area, so free trade, while increasing the productive power of labor, and thereby augmenting wages, cannot benefit mankind while the laborers themselves are forced to compete with each other for the mere opportunity to subsist.

In this sense free trade is like invention and the advancement of science. It gives labor a third hand.

When the steamship supplanted the clipper, the locomotive the horse, the diesel cat the man with the shovel we were told that the condition of labor would change, that poverty would vanish, that the bread lines and dole would be ancient history and that every home would be secure against the fear of want.

But it is not so! With capital capable of rendering infinite aid to labor, we yet find men struggling with each other for the privilege of working, as though the work in itself were the goal of life instead of being the means to the goal.

Until the war produced artificial good times we had appalling vagrancy problems, to say nothing of share croppers and marginal subsistence groups. What improvements there were in laboring conditions may be largely attributed to the labor unions, which forced through reactionary legislatures statutes that would make nine jobs do for ten men.

Therefore we see that free trade, like invention, while giving promise of lessening the toll and suffering of the laboring masses could be still more successful. But what destroys the universal benefit to be derived from invention must destroy the universal benefit that would accrue from free trade.

In their very nature free trade and invention tend toward equality of distribution, for by their application more men are more easily able to satisfy their needs and by getting what they want give in return what other men desire. But while this is the na-

tural tendency the effect on a glutted labor market where most men have only their labor to sell and a few have the enormous power of buying labor, the reverse becomes true.

The invention or trade facility that is intended for all men, while benefiting all, will benefit a few in a far greater proportion than the many, thus producing inevitably a class of haves and have-nots.

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**Men who enjoy the title of free men, but are free only to emigrate or to work at starvation wages or work only with some one else's permission cannot be enriched by invention or trade that increases the production of wealth. For they have no more power to share in it than the slave of old.**

The few who have the privilege of hiring the laborer could still (were it not for the unions) give to him only what they would give a slave—enough to subsist upon—to reproduce his kind and get out the work. When the laborer becomes old—when he has a heart lesion, an irreducible hernia, nephritis, strabismus, pleurisy or arthritis—when the girl loses her charm and the boy his vitality—they can be tossed into the social dung heap and the ever-pressing crop of labor, begging for the privilege to grub in the bowels of the earth on some man's land, will spring forward to replace them.

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If we would find the seeds of war, we must look to the source from which we spring—the Earth—the Mother of Mankind.

**For where we permit the few to inherit the earth, we make slaves of the yet unborn as well as of those who are now giving their blood in the hope that liberty and justice may survive.**

Grant me the ownership of the earth and no matter what you call yourselves you are in truth my slaves, and invention and free trade will be as wine in my bottle while for you they will be the bitterest vinegars.

Justice cannot be denied. If we would stop war we must stop injustice and that commences with the heritage of all men—the Earth.