

While There Is Yet Time

Let us think. It won't be long now before thinking—like the science of political economy—is out-moded.

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In New York recently we had a "Stop Hitler" parade. Czecho-Slovakian and Albanian societies have been holding protest meetings in America. Washington is sending notes and issuing indignation statements. (Remember Wilson?) Maudlin pacifists are calling for measures purely martial. On street corners, at social gatherings, in homes, the talk is of war, war, war.

So it was back in 1913. Business was bad then, as now. There were many unemployed. Factories were shutting down. The Kaiser had done something to irritate the British at Morocco. The engines of propaganda started. In 1914 the whole business of inflaming human passion to the point of murder was in full swing.

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The engines are again in operation. Again the chief engineer is Poverty, the chief assistants are Protection and Landlordism. The oilers are Militarism and Greed. The imperialistic feeders of 1913 have been replaced by a hideous deformation called Communism, whose sickly anti-social mind gloats at the opportunity of pouring into the hopper whatever human decency this civilization has retained.

While there is yet time, let us think. When the engines of propaganda are screeching a cacophony of lies, when their funnels are emitting the thick, black, stinking smoke of hatred, reason is completely replaced with a madness that only a Dante can describe. To us who went through the 1914-18 holocaust even the memory is frightening.

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This is going to happen: At first we shall take sides. Our choice will be due to prejudice born of propaganda, although we shall stoutly proclaim our rationality. Then we shall insist on others taking our side; we shall become protagonists. Then we shall hate those who do not take

our side; those who are not for us are against us. Then we shall take measures to ostracize those who disagree with us; we shall hate.

All this before the country is actually at war. Families will be split into opposing camps. We shall invite to our homes only those who agree with us. Club members with views opposed to the ruthless majority will resign, because they will be expected to resign. Even the reasonableness of philosophy will shrink in the putrid atmosphere of war hatred.

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Then the war will come. Our propaganda-fostered hatreds will be congealed into laws. With venom in our veins we shall gloat over the punishment inflicted on men too noble to be debased to our level. We shall try to rip from their minds with inquisitorial methods the grace of reason which, had we sense to know it, might stand us in good stead when in course of time we tire of our insanity.

We shall hand over to a monster State every vestige of human liberty which was wrested from it for us during the centuries. The price of the war will be paid not only in lives and money, but in the debasement of the individual into a Thing. We shall be made over, and our children's children will be made over, into the likeness of a Thing—without rights save those that are granted to us by a Master State—without property save that which is vouchsafed to us by its Army, and which will never exceed the necessities of life. Reason, the quality which differentiates man from beast, will be as completely suppressed as the power of the State can do it, and that which is nearly Man will become an Obedient Mechanism.

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While there is yet time, let us think. War—any war, every war—is destructive. Man always loses. The only possible winners in any war are—Death and Privilege.