

The American
MERCURY

A GOVERNOR LOOKS AT GOVERNMENT

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Governor of Massachusetts

THROUGHOUT its entire history the fundamental principle of our democracy, as of every other democracy, has remained the same: the performance by government of only such services for the benefit of the individual citizen as he believes can best be performed by all citizens acting together for the common good. Always the emphasis has been on the individual and his interests; government has ever been looked upon as no more than his servant. So in discussing current problems I like to ask myself: What does the average citizen ask of this or that unit of government — local, state or national? Are the governmental services of benefit to him, and are they performed with

maximum efficiency? If the needs of each individual are truly met, then only does government function as it should.

Obviously what every American citizen asks of his government at present is that it prosecute the war to a quick and victorious conclusion, and toward that end he is willing to make any sacrifice. That is the primary wish of all of us. But to make the winning of the war worthwhile we must give serious thought to the many difficult problems which will descend upon us the moment after the last shot is fired. This is a people's war, and the peace must be a people's peace. Our average citizen wants the United States to carry its fair and

just load in world affairs. He wants it not only to take part in setting up the terms of peace, but in making certain that those terms are carried out to the last item. Only in this way can we keep faith with the men and women in our armed forces and spare future generations another war like the present.

At this stage it would be rash to draw up a blueprint of the peace terms or of the postwar world. Events are moving too rapidly. There are too many conflicting, changing and imponderable factors involved. Let us not forget that the Constitution of the United States was not drawn up till ten years after the Declaration of Independence, and then only after long deliberation.

Certain things, however, are already clear enough. The physical security and the future prosperity of the United States must be our primary concern. Events have proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the future of the United States depends upon the stability of the world. Greater friendly understanding between nations is absolutely essential if international peace is to be preserved. No gross international injustice, no gross international aggression must ever again be looked upon as alien to us. The progress of science has made all

nations neighbors. What happens to one is the concern of all.

The United States must assume its full share of neighborly responsibility, but in doing so we must beware of the holier-than-thou attitude. We cannot expect all the other peoples of the earth to have the same points of view, the same desires, the same reactions, just as we do not expect them to impose their ways upon us. There must be a spirit of give and take. Differences of race and creed must in no way interfere with tolerance for each other's beliefs and customs. Only the attainment of this goal will have made of this war a great and holy cause. Otherwise it would better not have been fought at all. The profound spiritual values of the conflict must never be lost sight of.

There are also practical aspects of the coming peace and the postwar world that command general agreement. "Sneak" attacks, such as the one on Pearl Harbor, must in the future be made impossible. We must have air and naval bases wherever the preservation of our national security demands them — in both the Pacific and the Atlantic.

As for international cooperation, there are many forms and all of them have merits. But whatever form is finally decided upon, it is

clear that the stability of the world depends upon the best possible relations among the United States, Great Britain, Russia and China, and between the Pan-American countries and the United Nations generally. Here, again, we don't have to tell each other how to run our local and private affairs. We need act together only on problems that affect our mutual security, our trade, and safety. The all-important thing is the will to act cooperatively in this sphere. It seems to me that the development of this will is immensely more imperative at this stage than the effort to draw up precise and detailed schemes of international organization, none of which can at present carry much authority.

Perhaps we must first make separate understandings with each of our Allies. Certainly they would be very helpful. The United States might profitably pledge itself to a general policy of teaming up with other nations to keep the peace once victory is achieved. A clear-cut resolution by Congress in that direction would not only lay a firm basis for international cooperation; it would clear the atmosphere and accelerate world progress for years to come.¹

¹ This article was written prior to the Congressional vote on the Fulbright resolution. — Ed.

II

With the world at peace again there will return the major responsibility of supplying the needs of our citizens at home. What each of them wants first of all is a job, and rightly so. Relatively, the troubles of a man at work are few. The problems of a nation at work are largely solved when the factory whistles blow. While prosecuting the war to complete victory must be our first duty now, planning to keep the country a going concern afterward is a responsibility we must assume at the same time.

The opportunity for each man to earn his daily bread is the surest guarantee of freedom from want. Naturally, character, initiative and willingness to work are also essential to that freedom. But in these complex days and in the perplexing times ahead, mere character and willingness to work are not enough. Jobs must be provided for willing workers at all times in the postwar world. It is a fundamental and terrifying fact that a nation unemployed threatens world peace.

With the end of the war in the United States will come an unprecedented shift from war to peace economy. Some 9,000,000 veterans, both men and women, will come home, eager to find jobs.

Many times that number, now working in munitions factories and shipyards, will find themselves unemployed. What will happen to these millions? Will they be obliged to rake leaves, sell apples, boon-doggle, exist on government relief? If not, where will they find the jobs that will permit them to live life as we in America know it should be lived? And what of the farmers, especially those with one horse and one plow, who will suffer just as much in the transition period as the industrial workers?

Some of them will not be able to help themselves while the retooling from war to peace is in progress. They will expect the government to create jobs for them on useful public projects. The federal government is rightly doing broad-scale planning in this direction, making preparations for vast public works which will take years to complete and will have permanent value. That is all to the good. But we must remember that such schemes can be only temporary; they cannot form the foundation for the future structure of our country. The people will want to get back on their own, and the sooner the better. Our nation was built by self-reliant men and women, and it is composed of the same type of

men and women today. They look upon government help as a very transient makeshift. That attitude is one of the glories of our democracy. Let us always foster it!

We who are in state and local government can and must play a major rôle in bringing back our economy to the plane where Americans can be themselves. We can stimulate thinking ahead by public officials, individuals, companies, local commercial groups, and industrial associations. Unless private enterprise and local government play the major rôle — unless the problem is solved by democratic means — we won't have a democracy very long.

In Massachusetts more than two years ago we formed a Postwar Readjustment Committee to lay the groundwork for meeting such problems. It is developing plans for the reconversion of the state's leading industries to peace-time production, either in their present fields or in new ones to which our resources, especially in skilled workers, are particularly adapted. We aim to help every returning soldier, every individual taken out of a war-time job, to direct his efforts to the best advantage of himself, which, we believe, will be to the best advantage of his community and ultimately of his nation.

Our committee advises the *consumer* to curtail present expenditures, get out of debt, save, buy government bonds for specific purposes, such as the children's education and the purchase of durable goods later. For the *business man* the committee recommends planning in terms of volume of output, large employment, and total profits over a long period, rather than in terms of high unit prices and high margins. *Labor leaders*, the committee points out, should recognize that business profits and jobs go together, and that they should think in terms of permanent jobs rather than wage rates alone. The committee emphasizes that *every plant* should put one man in charge of postwar planning on a full time basis *now*.

If industry, large and small, distributor as well as manufacturer, will tackle the tremendous task, then we shall win the postwar battle without suffering any serious social injury. Jobs, unlike Topsy, won't just grow up. We must deliberately create them. And the time is now, for already thousands of our boys are returning home, eager to be rehabilitated and go to work.

Aviation, of course, will offer the greatest opportunities for postwar progress and jobs for thousands

of workers. The postwar period will see the real beginning of the air age. The operational phase will be ready for practically immediate realization, though the economic phase will present vast and intricate problems still to be settled. I believe there must be 1. world-wide freedom of peaceful transit; 2. private ownership and management; 3. genuine competition; 4. reasonable government regulation; and 5. the closest international co-operation. It goes without saying that government at all levels—national, state and local—civic groups and private industry, should exert great efforts to assist in the development of air transport, both passenger and freight, private and commercial. I look to the establishment of international airways as one of the most potent forces for international peace.

III

Beyond and above a job the average citizen wants the opportunity to get ahead and provide his family with a little more than he enjoyed. Victory abroad will not secure this opportunity for him. We at home must actively and continually strive for it. That means more team-play among workers and employers. It means constant

readjustments in the functioning of collective bargaining, more extensive cooperation through labor-management committees, some of which are already operating successfully. In Massachusetts we have one that meets for discussion and suggestions and covers the state as a whole. The same idea can be carried out even more effectively in individual plants.

The average worker rightly favors collective bargaining as the basis of America's future growth and stability. Judicious government assistance and regulation have to a great extent checked the abuses in both industry and labor. Our stupendous war production is traceable to the team-play among all three: government, labor and industry. The fervor of war-time effort can and must be duplicated in peace-time. I have small patience with those who depict the labor-industry relationship as a struggle. Mutual respect between workers and employers, and friendly intervention or regulation by government, can accomplish astonishing results. It has done so in war. It can do so in peace.

I cannot stress too much the importance of mutual respect in all social, as well as individual, relationships. The average citizen, whether he be worker or employer,

whether or not he himself belongs to a racial or religious minority, I am convinced, wants fair treatment for all. We have done much in fostering this tolerance, but there remains much more to do. I am in favor of the widest possible discussion of real and fanciful complaints, even when coming from crackpots and agitators, because I believe the fundamental good sense of the American people will side, in the end, with what is right and fair. We need all the understanding and tolerance we can get. Only a really united and tolerant America will be worthy of our courageous soldiers and sailors when they return from the battlefronts of the world. As the late Justice Louis D. Brandeis has said, "The United States is a nation of nations." As such it must set an example to the rest of the world. It has done so in the past, and I believe it will continue to do even more so in the future.

The average citizen looks to his government for an increasing amount of economic security, especially in the forms of unemployment compensation and old age security. The funds for the first are raised from labor and industry. The national government provides administrative costs, and the states, the administration. I strongly be-

lieve the states should continue to perform this function. Children's aid and old age security are provided by a combination of funds from local, state and national governments. Both services must be constantly improved and extended. Compensation for illness or disability may well be added gradually; and naturally those who are injured in the present war must be adequately provided for. And where a man or woman cannot work, direct relief should be available. But no government unit should ever make a promise of a benefit it cannot see its way clear to carry out. There is no greater hypocrisy to our people and no better way to create lack of confidence in government.

In all these fields we have yet to work out completely satisfactory federal-local relationships. The average citizen feels his local community can far better administer to his needs than a paternalistic federal government. How much the federal government should enter the picture, even with subsidies, depends upon the tax problem — the current need for revenue and the methods applied to raising it. Of the need for government help in social security there can be no question, but we must always remember that the most effective

help which Americans have known from 1620 to 1943 has been help to help themselves.

The average American does not want the New Deal entirely scuttled if that means losing what has been unquestionably gained in the past decade. There can be no thought of turning our backs on the advances made in social security, regulation of securities exchanges, working conditions, wages and hours, and similar progressive measures. The average citizen wants to discard only government by edict, collectivism and experiments made simply for the sake of change. He has no use for mere tradition. He wants to go forward without hesitation or fear. He wants to take the offensive in social progress. He wants to share fully in the operation of government, and he wants his town or city, and his state, which knows his needs best, to have the first call in meeting those needs. He rightly fears the weakening of individual enterprise, initiative and resourcefulness by an overgrown central government.

The question of states' rights in our system of government is coming more and more to the front. A clue to its importance can be found in the recent newspaper poll of Congress as to the most vital domestic problems. Senators and

Representatives of both parties placed as first and third on the list: *the decentralization of government* and *the safeguarding of private enterprise*. It was no coincidence that the Governors of our states in annual conference in Columbus, Ohio, last June, made this topic the basis of their Number One resolution. Pointing out that to help win the war the states have already yielded many of their powers to the federal government, they unanimously resolved:

No further concessions or encroachments on states' rights should be agreed to, except such as may clearly appear to be necessary to achieve victory, and that all rights of the states heretofore relinquished to the federal government to further the war effort be promptly reclaimed when this war shall be successfully terminated.

I feel, however, that the word *rights* does not clearly convey the spirit of the resolution. The states do not seek to preserve moth-eaten prerogatives. They seek only the restoration of the chance to do some of the jobs which can be done better by them than by remote control. The need for centralized authority in war-time is self-evident; but it decidedly should not continue into peace-time.

Looking toward the future, it is interesting to speculate what the result will be of certain trends we

can see developing. Will the tendency to more and more federalization escape all checks, so that everything will be run from Washington, with the states practically disappearing as units of government, and even municipalities taking orders from Washington? This was actually suggested recently by a federal official in Baltimore! Will the present war-time system take permanent form, with nationally appointed administrators, working through regional assistants, who cooperate in varying degrees with local officials? Or, finally, will there be a return to our history-tested balance of local, state and national governments? I favor the last choice as the best. Further, I think that the better the job which the state governments do now, on a strictly war program, the more will the people want them to resume greater responsibility in peace-time.

But can they function in the fields where they can serve best if the federal government taps the principal sources of revenue and constantly makes it more difficult for them to collect enough taxes to carry on? Can they, in fact, continue to exist at all if this trend persists?

The federal government, for example, builds housing which is tax

free. The law provides, to be sure, that the administrator *may* pay to the cities in which these projects are located a sum equivalent to what the taxes would be if the property were in private hands. Unfortunately, he doesn't, as we have learned in Massachusetts, and a double burden falls on the city or state. Not only does the local unit fail to get the taxes rightfully due it; it must look for revenue elsewhere to build schools for the children in the housing projects, pave streets, and so on. A similar problem arises with war factories built and owned by the federal government. They, too, pay no local taxes. The revenue involved is tremendous when you consider that the federal government, according to a recent report, has taken from the tax rolls of the states an area equal to that of all the Atlantic Coast states plus West Virginia and Ohio, including all buildings and improvements on the land. This, I admit, *may be* justified in the war emergency, but it will raise many grave problems if not corrected in peace-time.

Clearly, a line has to be drawn somewhere. Certain sources of revenue should be the sole province of the state and local governments, while others properly belong to the national government. Some may

rightfully belong to either. An unbiased study of the whole subject should be made and a definite policy adopted, *not just talked about.*

Industry must not be taxed to extinction. It must be permitted to accumulate sufficient reserves for deferred maintenance, alterations and depreciation from hard war service. Otherwise it will never be able to rebuild to peace-time service and provide jobs. In no case must taxes be permitted to drain a man's earnings to the point where they rob him of his incentive to work and get ahead.

IV

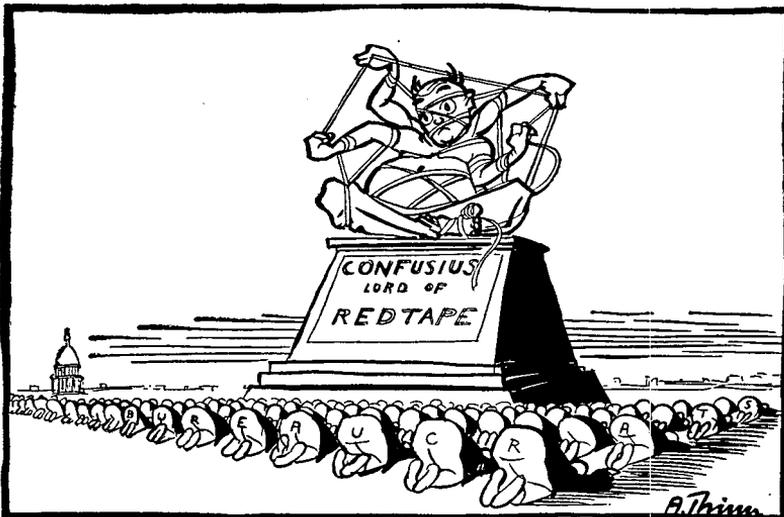
The great personal virtues extolled by Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln must be revived. The country was built from the bottom up and not from the top down. Let us not reverse the direction. Always we must bear in mind the needs of the individual citizen, the common man. He must feel, and truthfully, that *he* is the most important consideration in his government's mind, not the other way around. And on election day he will mark his ballot in accordance with this principle, which is basic with our democracy. Patriotism is stronger than policing.

If the Republican Party will pay close attention to the needs and wishes of the average citizen, it will merit and win his approbation. It has a great opportunity. Its power as the minority party is tremendous. Half the governorships of the nation are at present held by Republicans, and in these twenty-four Republican states reside nearly two-thirds of the whole population. There are plenty of progressive, experienced Republican leaders in private as well as public life who are capable of assuming responsibility in local, state and national affairs.

The American people are look-

ing to them for sound leadership. But they insist on the truth. They will take come what may. They don't want procrastination and political sidestepping.

If this country can go all out for war, it can go all out for peace. So let us tackle our peace problems now with the same fighting spirit that is bringing doom to the Axis. Let us look first to complete victory; then beyond victory abroad to victory at home and peace in the world for more than one generation to come. We can have it if we all work together for it. The average man and woman prays for it and will do his or her part to get it.



Worship in Washington

INSIDE POLAND TODAY

BY LEON DENNEN

This is the story of life in Poland in the fifth year of Nazi domination as told to me by a liaison agent of the great Polish underground movement who recently arrived in this country. I am not at liberty to identify this brave man lest his own life and the safety of his comrades be jeopardized. But this secret emissary is personally known to the highest government officials both in Washington and in London, with whom he has conferred, as well as to the editors of THE AMERICAN MERCURY.

For two days, hours at a stretch, I recorded his detailed story. He spoke deliberately and unemotionally. Not once did he refer to his own heroic exploits, which are indeed beyond the imagination of the average person living under normal conditions. Most of what he had to say must remain secret until the Nazis are expelled from his country. But his account of how people actually live under Nazi rule in Poland today can be published. It is given here substantially as he told it to me. — L. D.

How do the Polish people manage to go on living under the Nazi heel? The answer is simple: when there is a strong desire to live there seems to be no end to what low level human needs can be reduced. In the face of general misfortune and misery, people who in normal times are selfish individualists somehow grow closer together. Mutual aid, sacrifice, daring become an everyday way of living.

This is what happened in Poland. Every waking moment, every ounce of our energy is devoted to

only one purpose — finding something to eat. And when one is lucky and manages to get hold of some food, one invariably shares it with one's neighbor. Thus the survivors manage to exist in a condition of semi-starvation.

Poland, you must remember, is a besieged country. Everything is under tight German control. Most of the large industrial plants have been taken over by the invaders. Poles work in them under conditions of virtual slavery. Small and medium-sized industrial enterprises