

**GOVERNMENT  
FOR THE PEOPLE**

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Government for the people by Thomas H. Reed

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**THOMAS H. REED**

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FOR THE PEOPLE**



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BY

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## PREFACE

This book is an effort to state in a thoroughly clear way, for that growing portion of the general public who are interested in the mechanism of government, some of the obvious truths with regard to it. It makes no claim to erudite profundity, which is always stupid and generally misleading. It is not markedly original. Originality in the interpretation of the phenomena of government is usually purchased at the expense of sound reasoning. This book is merely a sane criticism of our institutions. It does not murder truth in the name of cleverness.

The material embodied in the succeeding chapters is the result of a long process of reflection and modification. In the fall of 1910, the writer delivered, under the auspices of the Extension Department of the University of California, a series of lectures on contemporary political questions. These lectures, frequently repeated, were finally crystallized into this book. During this long period of gestation, what were originally separate essays have

grown into a single constructive criticism of our government.

The bibliographies appended to each chapter are not intended to be exhaustive, but merely to suggest some of the more available works and articles for use by those who wish to pursue the subject further.

I wish to make acknowledgment of the constant encouragement which has been afforded me throughout the various stages of my work by Professor David P. Barrows, Head of the Political Science Department and Dean of the Faculties of the University of California. Although differing with me materially in some of my conclusions, he has always urged me to a sincere expression of my own views. Mr. J. H. Quire has assisted me in the correction of proofs, and Mr. J. R. Douglas, Teaching Fellow in Political Science, has given untiring service in the preparation of the book for the press. My greatest helper has been my wife, who at every stage has been ready with pointed criticism.

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA,

January 11, 1915.

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# GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE

## CHAPTER I

### THE CITIZEN AND THE STATE

MUCH learning and ingenuity has been applied to defining the term "state," with the net result that we may safely conclude that no inclusive definition is possible. It means one thing to one set of men, to another, another. For our present purpose it means simply society, politically organized. It is more fundamental than government. Possessing a personality apart from its machinery and agents, it alone is permanent among changing forms. Give it a "local habitation and a name" and we have that "Country" for which patriots die.

The one great duty that man owes to the state is obedience. In the most primitive forms of society of which we have record, long before the appearance of government in the ordinary sense of that term, there were certain

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acts which were generally recognized as inimical to the common good and others as essential to its preservation. The custom of the people forbade the one and enjoined the other. To break these simple folk-ways meant exclusion from the tribe, within which there could be no place for one who imperiled its safety by disobedience of its collective judgment. We may leave the origins of these primitive customs for others to conjecture. It is enough for our purposes that they existed and were obeyed. Gradually it was found desirable to have some determination of their scope and some formal judgment when they were broken. Gathered about the council fire the clans listened to the solemn pronouncement of the "law-speaker" and rendered their verdict of guilt or innocence. Later generations have devised elaborate machinery for the authentic declaration of the law and its interpretation and enforcement, but the obligation of obedience has never abated. A multitude of commands are issued instead of a few, but to the whole category, from dying in battle to paying one's taxes, obedience is due.

Obedience is an especially imperative duty under the circumstances of modern society. Such society, indeed, would be impossible without it. Man cannot live in that proximity to man