



The Nature of Peace

Thorstein Veblen

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The Nature of Peace is the penultimate publication of the collected works of Veblen being published by Transaction. This work contains both a theory of politics and a theory of economics in regard to war. Thorstein Veblen's approach to this topic is at once empirical, instrumental, and matter-of-fact. He poses the question, "What are the terms on which peace at large may hopefully be installed and maintained?" Veblen's quest for peace does not rely on grand forces but rather on various conditions, some propitious and some prohibitive.

The regime of peace, according to Veblen, is a function of the pacification of both the dynastic state and the modern state, the class struggle, the control of government by privileged business and other propertied interests, and the workings of the market. War and warlike behavior are matters not only of psychology but of both politics and economics, that is to say, matters of the social system as a whole.

Warren Samuels writes in his new introduction that eighty years after this book was originally written, we remain uncertain about the prospects of peace. To understand this uncertainty one can begin by reading *The Nature of Peace*. But, Samuels warns, the reader must be prepared to suspend the rationales and moral indignations promulgated and reinforced by the institutions of social control and communication in his or her nation. Thorstein Veblen's brilliant analysis about the pursuit of perpetual peace is necessary reading material for sociologists, philosophers, political scientists, economists, military specialists, and government officials.

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