

Land and Freedom

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Comment and Reflection

A NEW world order is being planned by the foes of democracy. It is now clear—if there ever was any doubt of it—that the sole guiding principle in this reconstruction is that might makes right. The dictators sneer at the weaknesses of the democracies. It would seem, then, that we should gain their respect by adopting a policy of firmness. Ironic indeed, therefore, are the recent outbursts of totalitarian temper at our progress according to their own standards—at the embargo of armaments; at our vigorous defense program; at the recent Pan-American agreement.

THE boastful strength of the dictatorships may not be a strength per se, but only an apparent weakness in the democracies, whose very nature is tolerant of imperfections. However, in these very imperfections democracy is far more efficient and progressive than the rigidly regimented dictatorships. Democratic nations are of necessity in a state of flux. They are like clay, capable of being moulded to suit new needs as they arise. On the other hand, the totalitarian states have been forcibly cut out of granite. Any further evolution, any new needs of human beings, aye, *any hope for freedom*, can only come through some violent outburst which must shatter the totalitarian concept. From what we know of the indomitable strength of the human spirit, is this hard and unmalleable construction so strong? Extreme hardness is often associated with great brittleness! Let us appreciate that our "weaknesses" may be our strength, and our salvation.

HOWEVER this may prove in the long run, we are momentarily faced with a very real and grave situation, with respect to the fearful onslaught of the dictators. Not the least of our worries is that South America may be pulled into the orbit of the totalitarians. It is feared that a trade "invasion" of our Southern neighbors will be followed by diplomatic representations to entrench the foes of democracy in the Western hemisphere. Thus will the way be paved for the establishment of enemy military bases on this side of the Atlantic.

WE are beginning to realize that, to solve this harrassing problem, basic economic relations must be considered. We recognize that the strength of the dictators in this hemisphere is the promise of doing a substantial business

with our Latin American neighbors. To pull South America in our direction we must open up our markets for her. To accomplish this end, we must increase the purchasing power of our people, and South America must do likewise. But no sane proposal to effect this has yet been offered. Instead, all sorts of ridiculous schemes have been suggested. Among them is the proposal to lend money to the South American countries, to enable them to purchase our products at prices higher than charged by other nations, thereby retaining their good will by buying it. Such unnatural schemes must fail, as they always have failed in the past, whether applied within or among nations.

IS there any remedy better than the sane and natural one of complete free trade? We should be willing to accept the full implications of this. Real free trade means the free exchange of goods between free and peaceful people, on equal terms. The policy of the United States has been an endeavor to export goods and insist on payments in gold. This is manifestly not in accordance with fundamentals. It has served only to provide us with a useless monopoly of the world's gold, which we are hoarding under the ground, and also to arouse the resentment of the other countries. It is this as well as our tariff policy that has made South Americans wary of our plans. To them the totalitarian bait of barter without currency seems relatively more promising. If we are to gain good relations with our Southern neighbors, and the rest of the world, we must assume, not a mandatory, but a bargaining attitude. On the other hand it is no violation of the principle of free trade if we refuse to ship war materials to the States that are now seeking to destroy freedom.

SPEAKING of preparedness, we feel that the present defense program of the United States will bankrupt the country unless we abandon the idea of supporting it out of taxes on industry and incomes. Such depletion of our already low earnings will continue to reduce purchasing power and throw more out of work. That there has been no proposal for raising the large amount required for an adequate defense system is illustrated by the low wages offered to those engaged in military service—\$21 per month. The present emergency can be met with comparative ease, if the tremendous sum we need is obtained from a direct levy on the land values of the nation. This is the only tax that will not bear upon production—in fact, it will increase production. It is the only source of revenue that will be adequate for our vast defense program.