

"Fatefulness" of Trade

SIRS: Never before have we had so opportune a time for pushing to the front of our educational program that neglected facet of our philosophy called Free Trade. Perhaps we shall never again have so favorable an opportunity. The world needs it as never before. Could Henry George have realized the immediacy of this need, or its fatefulness, he never would have relegated free trade to the rear as a matter of minor importance.

Trade and production are the obverse and reverse of the same coin, so to speak—inseparable parts of the industry by which nations and the world at large live. Without trade there could be no division and specialization of labor, no cooperation, no civilization. Trade, the exchange of goods and services, is the origin of civilization and its very life-blood. To restrict the circulation of that life-blood is to stunt and restrict civilization. To stop it would be its death and reduce us to solitary savagery. To extend the area of trade is to broaden and deepen civilization. Is it not evident that trade restraints have been carried so far as to endanger civilization?

We have heard: "The nation that will not buy, neither shall it sell." Turn it around to read: "The nation that cannot sell, neither can it buy." Looked at in this way, it is easy to see the predicament in which nations deficient in extent and variety of natural resources are placed by the intricate network of trade barriers which all nations have erected; also the origin of their ignorant and blind belief that they need "more living room." What they really need is access to the raw materials of the earth, and Free Trade would give such access to all nations, to the profit and prosperity of all concerned.

For trade is a two-way traffic. Imports call for exports. Exports call for imports. To restrict trade either way restricts it both ways. Money does not pass in international trade, for each country's money stays at home, where alone it circulates freely. To realize what this means is to understand why it is not necessary to wait for a concert of nations, or until economic conditions among the nations approach an approximate parity, before we can have free trade.

The first nation to realize the true nature of trade and shape its commercial policy accordingly by tearing down its own trade barrier, regardless of what other nations do, need fear no "deluge" of imports, for such "deluge" will but call for a corresponding movement of exports to pay for them. Instead of committing economic suicide, it will reap a rich reward, for it will greatly strengthen its com-

petitive position and draw to itself so great a proportion of the world's trade that other nations, when they understand what is happening, will be impelled to adopt the same policy of freedom lest they be left behind in the march of progress. Such nation will be a potent influence to lead the world to complete economic freedom.

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