

Good Sleeping Dogs

THERE IS A PROVERB which recommends the wisdom of letting "sleeping dogs lie." Today we have a number of "sleeping dogs"—some quieted by the exigencies of war and some by the apathy or ignorance of sociological affairs on the part of the ordinary man. In the midst of the platitudes on democracy and on freedom are the sleeping dogs of bureaucracy and collectivism, and slavery.

By far the most of us want to win the war; by far the most of us are not only acquiescent but willing to surrender individual rights to assure victory. Only the theoretical stupids will refuse to admit that it is necessary at this time to have an economic system similar to those of the frankly totalitarian economies of Germany, Italy, Russia, Japan and England—all operating by planning from above. Only these same individuals will deny that fighting modern wars calls for granting dictatorial powers to the chiefs of state of the nations involved.

Will these powers be rescinded after the war? Will those established in lucrative bureaucracies surrender their authority to the people? Will not the argument run: "We won the war, a war of production, by planning. Now that we have peace we can keep it by planning. Surely winning the peace is as important as was winning the war."

One of the "sleeping dogs" is the authority given to the newly created Manpower Commission which enables it to dictate not only the time and place but the kind of work that each individual shall do. In addition, he will be told for whom he shall work and thus the wages he will receive. Needful as it may be now, there never has been anything more like slavery under the law. For the Commission to retain its power and to remain undissolved after the war is to establish slavery firmly, with the home, children, and all life controlled by the State.

Lovers of Freedom may let this "sleeping dog" lie for the present, but some day the beast will be strong enough to bite those who would curb it. For that day they should carry a torch with which to knock him down, the torch of economic enlightenment. And they dare not forget that the democratic criterion derives its strength from the natural, inalienable rights and dignity of the individual and that this criterion is in irreconcilable opposition to collectivism under any name—including the benign planned paternalism affected by all embryonic dictatorship governments.

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