

Land and Freedom

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Comment and Reflection

OUR attention is attracted to an article by Newton D. Baker in the magazine section of the *New York Times* of recent date, entitled "Two Wars—Fifteen Years ago and Today." The war of today, as Mr. Baker views it, is a war against depression. There is no analogy unless it be this: that we are fighting depression much as the ancient armies of China are reported to have done by carrying to the field of battle monstrous images of wood and cardboard whose ugly and threatening visage was supposed to strike terror into the hearts of the enemy. There is a likeness here in the methods we are using to overcome depression—blue eagles of frowning countenance, incantations and threats of terrible things.

PERHAPS looking backward to the peak of his career when he was Secretary of War Mr. Baker is betrayed by the war psychology. He complains that the fight against depression is "a glamourless thing having nothing of martial music or the exaltation of mass movements." He speaks of welfare associations, hospitals, the Federal Children's Bureau, as if these really constituted weapons to fight the depression. He urges the maintenance of the morale of the nation as necessary in the fight to overcome depression, when what is really necessary is that men and women should think.

AN appeal to military psychology will not help us here. There is no analogy. We are not meeting a foreign enemy in mortal combat; we are meeting our own mistakes and trying to remedy them—at least some of us are. The conflict, if there is a conflict, is with our own ignorance and injustice and the rules of common honesty—it is intellectual, moral, spiritual. The forces we use are the "imponderables;" we do not and cannot proceed as a nation at prepares for war. The depression is a thing of our own creating; we are not called upon to make physical sacrifices in seeking a solution. But we are asked to put aside political and social preferment. We are asked—and God demands it of us—that we be men and not wooden images.

If this is war it differs from other wars in that there is joy in pursuit of it. It is a wonderful thing to know

a great truth like ours. It is a truth that makes so many things plain; it is the truth that makes us free. We are not perplexed and confused any longer—life has a new meaning. We may for the purpose of rhetoric conceive of this as a Holy War—this struggle against selfishness and greed and injustice.

IF this is a war it is one in which no man is slain and in which only error is destroyed. Yet if Mr. Baker still prefers to think of it in terms of war, if the military phrases spring so easily to the lips of this former pacifist, we venture to ask where he himself stands in the great spiritual conflict of ideas that must be waged. It was Henry IV of France who, returning from the great battle of Arques, sees an officer coming tardily to the field. He shouts to him: "Go hang yourself, Crillar; we have fought at Arques and you were not there!"

IT is interesting to read in the *New York Times* of Oct. 28 an article by A. A. Berle who we are told helped to formulate the Recovery programme. From Washington have come of late statements intended to reassure us that the administration is not making any fundamental changes, but are merely assuming directing functions in industry, and that government is only acting as an agency in this work. And this despite the things that have been done and the more dire things that the administration has threatened.

PROF. Berle is more frank. We quote:

"Those of us who had the privilege of working on the original plan began with the assumption that what we needed most was a machine that worked. Whether it was rugged individualism, Fascism, Communism, Socialism, or what-not, made not the slightest bit of difference."

SO there is nothing fundamental in it—it is all things to all men. No guiding policy is sought or wanted. Not whether it is right or just or equitable, but merely will it work. Doubtless many plans will work in a way. Russian sovietism works—at least nobody starves to death. But if the main purpose and desire of the administration is its workability these architects of the New Folly are ready, on Prof. Berle's own showing, to adopt it!