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August 6, 1964

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Thank you for your letter of July 31, which I am passing along to the editor who handles our "Letters" column.

You read implications into Mr. Davies' article, I am afraid, which he did not intend and which none of the editors were able to detect.

Sincerely,

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Coq d'Or Farm
Hyattstown, Maryland

John Fischer/aff

July 31, 1964

Mr. John Fisher, Editor
Harper's Magazine
49 East 53rd. St.
New York City, N.Y. 10016

Dear Jack,

"A Crisis of Casualness in Latin America" is a shocking, open appeal for fascism in Latin America, and I am astounded to see it in Harper's.

John Puton Davies writes smoothly and persuasively about non-existent facts that his long history in the field should tell him are un-facts.

His appeal for "order" comes straight from the mouth of the late Fuehrer: "Ordnung muss sein!" It is not the secret anywhere in history, not in our country, not in any of the other successful countries in the West.

"Enlightened authoritarianism", Mr. Davies says, is the "surest, least spasmodic course." Again he flies into the record of history and, of course, uses mutually exclusive terms. Do we or did we find "Enlightened authoritarianism" under Trujillo, any of the long series in Haiti, Peron, Rojas Pinella, Perez Jimenez, or even his bush-league hero Stroessner, inheritor of an ancient fascism, who indeed "has no serious peasant problem"- the jails and graves are full of those who opposed him and his infamous predecessors.

There can be no easy solution of the problems of Latin America. But if history is clear on one point it is this: they don't need their military, and they cannot afford it. Their economies and democracies would be a lot stronger if the scarce funds wasted on the armies had been put to constructive use. In almost every case it is literally true that the very force Mr. Davies urges as the solution of the problem is the cause of it. The cost of the almost totally unneeded military in Latin America has brought these poor lands to the brink of bankruptcy.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg

THE EASY CHAIR



A Crisis of Casualness in Latin America

by John Paton Davies, Jr.

The guest in the Easy Chair this month is a former U.S. Foreign Service Officer and veteran observer of communist tactics—Russian, Chinese, and Latin-American. He is now a manufacturer of fine furniture in Lima, Peru, and his book, "Foreign and Other Affairs: A View from the Radical Center" was published in July by W. W. Norton.

Hugo Blanco is sometimes called the Peruvian Castro. But he has thus far been considerably less successful than the Bearded One. After a year of commanding a scraggly guerrilla outfit in the jungle piedmont of the Andes, the twenty-eight-year-old Blanco was captured, alone and sick, in May 1963. Instead of being shot on sight, or after a quick trial, he was put in jail.

Ten years earlier Castro, too, was put in jail for insurrection. He would still be there, with four more years to serve, had not the Batista dictatorship indulged him with an amnesty. This act of grace released Fidel for his excursion into the Sierra Maestra, and for all that ensued—including a nuclear showdown between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the Alliance for Progress.

It should cause no surprise if Blanco is also given a reprieve, notwithstanding his alleged implication in murders and bank robberies. Meanwhile, he has been doing not so badly. In prison he has been permitted to receive delegations of activists, whom he has exhorted to further the revolutionary struggle.

These sessions were limited to Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. But Blanco considered this unduly restrictive. So, in December 1963, it was reported that he asked for improved reception facilities. The Minister, we were told, "manifested that he would study the possibility that visits would not be restricted."

An easygoing attitude toward subversion is not rare in the Good Neighborhood. We tend to think members of the opposition are strung up on lampposts, lined up against a wall and shot, or thrown into dungeons where they are tortured and allowed to rot. Such is, of course, the case in Castro's Cuba. But generally speaking, in Free Latin America, the trend is currently toward toleration of dissent—at least on the Far-Left.

This indulgent attitude is due, in part, to the fact that the old order is breaking up. There is consequently an uncertainty about, if not outright rejection of, the old absolute values. Particularly is this so in the case of the youth. Conversely, there is receptivity to innovations, especially to the "progressiveness" of Marxism.

Then, Washington has been beating a tom-tom about democratic practices. That means letting opposition exist, accepting diversity. But in most Latin circumstances, diversity is not creatively contained within the bounds of consensus. It therefore tends to fly off in all directions. Without an educated majority or traditions of moderation, freedom of assembly, expression, and agitation often end up in license.

These conditions abet the Latin custom of casual public administration. This nonchalance has, of course, its charms. But it is a poor defense against the subtle persistence of communist tactics. It means less than total efficiency in the long process of national development, which we like to think will eventually provide a fundamental immunization against communism. Meanwhile, however, the Communists try to sabotage the developmental process through subversion and outright terrorism. Much of the communist success in sabotage is due to nothing more than governmental casualness.

Together with an easygoing attitude toward Marxist subversion and terrorism, there is in most Latin countries a volatile nationalism. We have been made aware of this by the recent outbursts of chauvinism in Panama.

To be sure, the spark that ignited the explosion was adolescent Americanism abetted by parental and official permissiveness. But the overcompensating uproar that followed was in the classic pattern of those "emerging" countries which have, over nearly half a century, suffered an inferiority complex from "unequal treaties" with or domination by a great power. What happened in Panama in January 1964 was not so different from the passionate demonstrations and violence—including communist incitements—that took place in the 1920s when Chinese mobs in Peking, Shanghai, and other cities

protested against foreign concessions and extraterritorial rights.

Panama was an extreme Latin-American example of nationalism expressed in negative terms, in anti-Americanism. But such emotionalism is not absent in other Latin-American countries. Their sympathies have been with Panama. And anti-American chauvinism can readily flare up in almost any of them.

This hostility to the Yanqui is often damaging to the nation indulging in it and usually stunts its growth. Certainly, Panama did itself economic harm by feuding with the United States. Nor have Argentina and Brazil helped their sick economies by threats to American oil and mining investments.

But anti-Americanism and economic nationalism—however self-defeating—are natural, even psychologically necessary, phenomena in Latin America. They are exhilarating for understandably envious, frustrated people seeking a foreign scapegoat for their inadequacies and dilemmas. In such circumstances, the more responsive the politicians to the "will of the people," the more truly representative the government, the more likely it is at least to placate anti-gringoism and even inflame it for political advantage.

To appreciate this situation, we have only to recollect anti-British prejudices out of our own past and how, as recently as the 1920s in Chicago, they were with less reason absurdly but effectively exploited for personal political gain.

Anti-Yanquismo and indulgence of communist subversion are natural partners. The Communists, of course, identify themselves with extreme nationalism, assume the role of ardent patriots, and penetrate nationalist movements in order to influence and eventually to control them. And supernationalists often find the Communists useful partners, sometimes discreetly welcoming their support at the polls. This interaction is more malignant—if less prevalent—than the plain garden variety of rabble-rousing and deranged organization.

The demagoguery and disorder thus fostered are the elemental enemies of national growth in wealth and well-being. Our forebears understood this when the United States was an under-

developed country—at least Hamilton, Madison, and Jay did. To them, the maintenance of order was the first requirement for getting anywhere. If a government could not maintain public order, it was idle to talk about constitutionalism or the exercise of self-government.

Order, imposed if necessary, but nevertheless order, is the necessary stable foundation for the intricate edifice of economic development and democracy. On quaking earth you cannot build anything more significant than a jumble of jackstraws.

Yet for some time now we have been insisting in Latin America on a formula which would have horrified our Federalist fathers. It is the reverse of their priorities. Stability and economic development—we now say—result from constitutional and representative government, from democracy. But when a society is in turbulent transition, as is the case in most Latin-American countries, when a consensus has not been achieved or cohesion imposed, then a representative government, naturally, represents contradictions and disorder.

Bolivia is an example. Its government has been lauded by Washington as a model for the rest of South America, assumably because it was popularly elected and has enacted a series of "reforms." As a "representative government," it reflects the conflicts and disorder of the primitive social revolution through which Bolivia is passing. Consequently, it hardly governs. It cannot even make its writ run throughout the land. For it is regularly defied by the miners' union which has its own armed militia. The government at La Paz has been kept going by handouts of American aid, subsidizing representative ineptitude and disarray.

Venezuela is another seeming triumph of democracy placed before order. Betancourt got away with it chiefly because Venezuela is one of the richest countries south of the Rio Grande, with an assured dollar income from its oil and iron and the highest per capita income in the area. Furthermore, Betancourt was an unusual type in public affairs. He was not a demagogue, nor a dilettante, nor a drone, nor a drunkard. He was politically literate, principled, and tough. He was also patient and clever

enough to keep the armed forces in line, on his side.

But he was dangerously lenient in dealing with the Communists. They—or the military—may yet be the undoing of his successor.

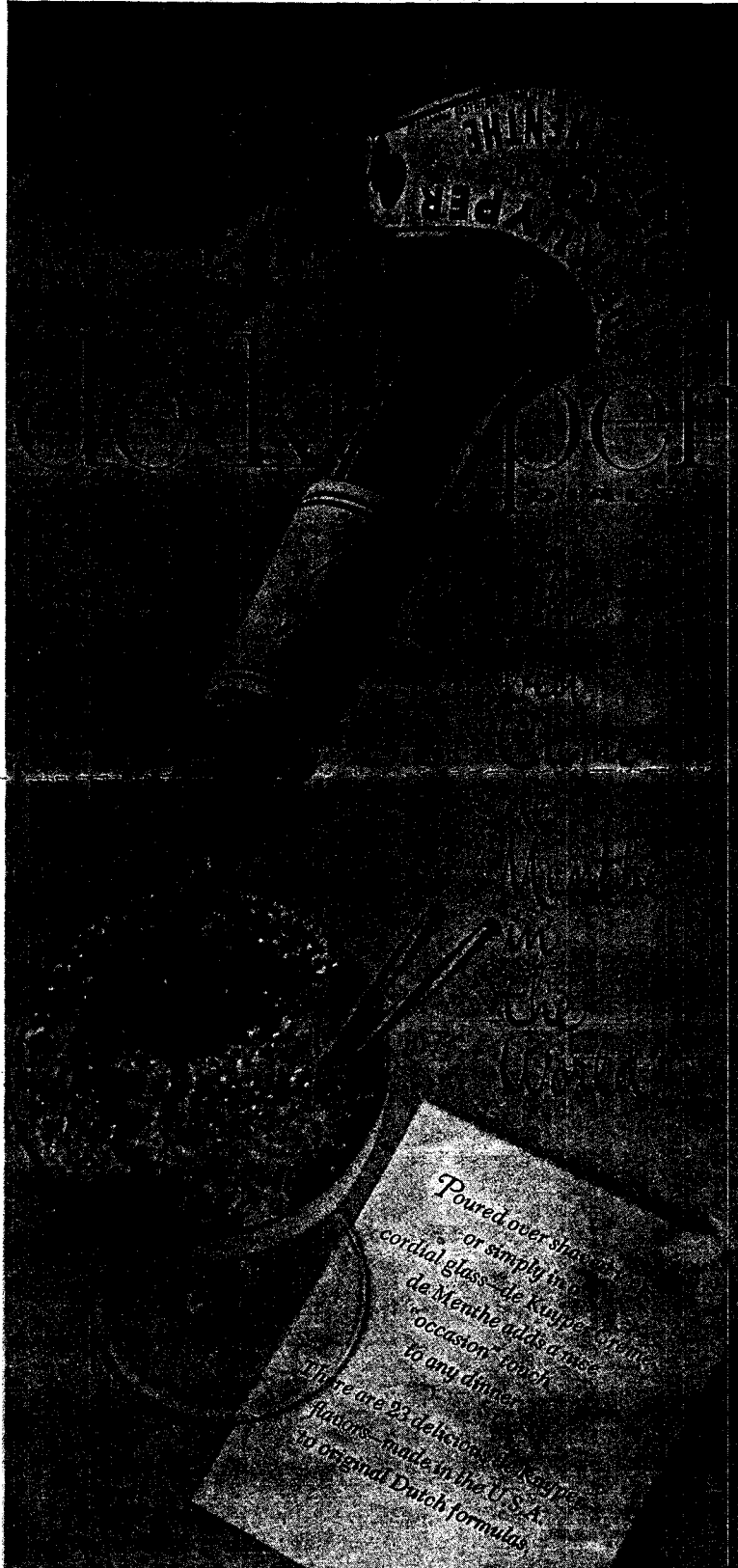
For if there is a breakdown in representative constitutional government in Latin America, the alternatives seem to be the Communists or a junta. We are against both. And we have generally tried to make it as rough as we dared for military governments. Certainly, in this decade, on grounds of political morality, Washington has been more ostentatiously disapproving of the Peruvian, Dominican, and Honduran juntas than of the Council of Ministers in Moscow.

This American abomination of juntas is not a very useful sentiment. Military take-overs are, in the Latin nature of things, a traditional and familiar phenomenon. And while they are often deplored, they are as often welcomed. On balance, the experience of the average man in most Latin-American countries has been no worse with military than with civilian governments.

Military regimes develop out of an internal reaction against disintegration and toward self-preservation, an impulse toward imposed order, authoritarian rule. In a society slipping into chaos, the armed forces are a disciplined institution, habituated to the preservation of the state. Often powerful civilian elements are predisposed to accept or actively collaborate in the establishment of military rule. Washington's tilting at juntas is therefore pretty quixotic, except as a domestic political gesture. But to charge against natural features on the Latin landscape can have no great productive end, and is sometimes mutually damaging.

In theory, the surest, least spasmodic course of modernization for Latin-American countries would be through enlightened authoritarian rule. For societies in racking transition, the prerequisite for development is a government strong and purposeful enough to impose and maintain order. Only stern administration can restrain the extravagant, unattainable demands of the revolution of the so-called rising expectations, and foster the necessarily slow

CREME DE MENTHE, GREEN OR WHITE, 80 PROOF, NATIONAL DISTILLERS PRODUCTS CO., N.Y.



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accumulation of wealth, education, and skills that constitute development. Rigorous civilian governments with the steady support of the armed forces might accomplish this. The alternative is rule by one or a junta of the new military, educated by war colleges in politics and economics.

But all of this is, of course, quite theoretical. Human affairs do not work out by tidy prearrangement. Governments are not made to order; they come into existence out of what is usually a quite untidy interaction of forces. Furthermore, at best, the time span to attain what we now regard as a developed status for the more advanced Latin-American countries, such as Mexico and Argentina, is about one generation. For the backward ones, such as Bolivia and Ecuador, it is at least two or three. It is difficult to imagine any high-minded, austere government, if attainable at all, lasting even one generation.

So we are in for a fairly messy course of events in the Good Neighborhood. A few nations may get by without wrenching setbacks. But most will probably undergo disorder and even periods of chaos.

The Alliance for Progress, as such, will make little difference to the outcome. Those nations prepared and willing to cooperate with us for their own benefit will do so, if we will reciprocate, *Alianza* or no *Alianza*. For those which will not, the *Alianza* will not change matters. The multilateral concept of an alliance is something we put in Latin mouths. The significant relationship is bilateral, between the United States, which provides the aid, and the Latin beneficiary.

To the extent that our financial and technical aid is sought and used, we can be helpful in Latin America. To the extent that we can quietly persuade our good neighbors to eschew the rabid folly of extreme nationalism and to welcome and protect foreign investments, we can further contribute to a healthy growth process.

But beyond this, there is really not a great deal we can do. Latin America will have to find its own solutions—and no-solutions. For it is no more possible in international than in interpersonal matters to work out other people's lives for them. While we

A Clear Case of "Gobble and Git"

by
Julian P. Van Winkle
Senior Proprietor
Old Fitzgerald
Distillery
Louisville, Kentucky
Established 1849



One of our Kentucky countrymen, visiting in Washington, was invited by his Congressman to attend one of those frequent (and often frenzied) cocktail parties which seem so much a part of the national scene.

Our man was accustomed to the leisurely type of Kentucky hospitality where the enjoyment of food, drink and quiet conversation occupy the greater share of a sociable evening.

Back home he recalled his experience. "We were out in ten minutes," he reported. "It was giggle-gabble-guzzle-gobble, git."

Never a guest at such an event, I have no way of knowing how much good made-in-America Bourbon is "guzzled" at official Washington parties.

A sizeable share I would assume, judging from our administrators' sworn endeavor to encourage American industry, staunch the outward flow of gold, lick unemployment and contain foreign competition.

At such functions, with foreign emissaries present—English, Scotch, Canadian, Russian, etc.—it is no more than international courtesy to provide their native potables. But Americans, for the most part I would hope, might take patriotic pride in drinking strictly American.

Outside of Washington, American professional and businessmen, many facing serious problems of foreign competition, gather by the thousands in conferences, conventions, etc.

The friendly glass in Hospitality Suites and at the pre-banquet Cocktail Hour is the order of the evening.

Here again, the company executive responsible for arrangements may "strike a blow for Freedom" by specifying that his guests be given full opportunity to enjoy the one whiskey indigenous to our American soil.

And because our hand-made Bourbon is the acknowledged favorite among so many top-notch business and professional people his wisest and safest choice might well be full-flavored OLD FITZGERALD.

*Kentucky Straight Bourbon
Bottled-in-Bond 100 Proof*

THE EASY CHAIR

seem to understand this about people, we often forget it about countries.

What would most upset us would be "another Cuba." And that may well happen. One or more Latin-American countries may "go communist." And someone, probably in the State Department, would then be accused of "losing a loyal ally."

It is impossible to predict where and how a communist take-over might occur. It might happen quite legally through the democratic process of elections—say in Chile. Or the Communists might triumph, say in Bolivia, through a military victory. Again, Cuban terrorism and intrigue might contribute decisively to a communist take-over in a Caribbean country. Finally, there is the risk that—as the economic and political situation in many of these countries deteriorates—their governments will succumb to demagogic opportunism. They will try to use the Communists but will, instead, be captured by them. Brazil was moving rapidly in this direction—until the military threw out Goulart.

In one Latin-American country—Paraguay—communism is not an active problem. General Stroessner simply has not tolerated any kind of subversion. Unmoved by American denunciations of him as a "dictator," he has slowly developed his country with penetration roads, improved river transport, and homesteading of the newly opened areas. Paraguay suffers from its landlocked position and its almost exclusive dependence on agricultural production. But it has no serious peasant problem and thus avoids one of the strongest issues exploited by the Communists.

What would "another Cuba" elsewhere in the hemisphere mean? For the country thus afflicted it would mean, almost surely, economic collapse. There is no reason to expect that any other Latin communist regime could manage its affairs better than the Cuban Castro and the Argentine Guevara have mangled the economy of the Pearl of the Antilles. Soon after the victory of a people's revolution, a new regime would be pleading for external aid. Because of the dependable incompetence of the communist economic system, assistance would have to be on a continuing basis.

These would be glum tidings for

Moscow or Peking. And it seems improbable that either would want to subsidize a new communist fiasco on the Cuban scale. The Soviet Union already has, through its mortgage on Castro, strategic lodgment in the Western Hemisphere. The Kremlin can hardly want to double its outlay, even for a second strategic position—especially at the risk of another confrontation with the United States.

And much as the Chinese would like a foothold in the Western Hemisphere, they can scarcely afford to maintain a Latin satellite at the Cuban rate.

Both Moscow and Peking want cut-rate advantages in Latin America. But any new Marxist dictatorship would want to produce spectacular accomplishments without delay. As it made a shambles out of the economy, because of ignorance, ideological superstitions and undisciplined temperaments, it would seek from its patron donations which would probably be more than either the Russians or the Chinese would be willing to cough up.

Resentment against Moscow or Peking would naturally ensue. Most Latin-American Communists, like nearly all Communists today, are nationalist Communists. And as such, they do not feel—as others felt in the monolithic, polarized, Stalinist period—bound to and dependent upon one center of authority.

So they would be free to shop around. They would not have to take their lives in their hands, as Tito did, and make a defiant, frightening break. Nor would they have to put on the hysterical, holier-than-thou performance of the Chinese a year ago. They could, after their revolutionary fever returned to something like normal, explore possibilities outside of the socialist camp, as Castro has been doing with Britain, Spain, and others.

Who knows? "Another Cuba," if one were to appear, might end up like Yugoslavia or Poland. It might apply for aid to the Alliance for Progress—which, having failed to prevent a communist take-over, might then try for a communist turn-over, in the direction of independence from Moscow and Peking—or even Havana, which might by then be a new center of communist authority.