

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

The City Hotel
Córdoba, Córdoba
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Dear Mr. Rogers:

José Ingenieros, philosopher-sociologist whose works are considered by many Argentines to be an objective and true interpretation of them, has been dead a score of years. Most of his writings, including his *Sociología Argentina*, were written before World War I. Ingenieros, although he may have made some errors of judgment, has a keen perception which commands respect. That perception is almost prophetic in the sense that Ingenieros saw quite clearly many of the forces which are still having a profound influence on Argentine life. Hence I am going to make a resume of his observations on Argentina's Sociological Evolution, the first part of his best known work, *Sociología Argentina*. It should be held in mind that these observations are those of an Argentine about the Argentine and that they were made more than a few years ago. Now we begin the resume.

Immigrants who settled in North America were from northern Europe; whereas southern Europeans settled sub-tropical, tropical and the relatively small temperate zone of Central and South America. The nordic and Latin races were in different stages of civilization at the time of settlement. There was a great contrast between their productive capacity and economic organization. The colonizers of North America did not marry Indians. Rather they pushed the Redmen westward, ever westward, until the Indian race disappeared. The mediterranean conquistadores mixed profusely with the native races, forming the mestiza or criolla race. England, the real leader in North American colonization, marched at the head of the nations of Europe and was, even in those days, forming the capitalistic system. Spain, by contrast, was burdened by the "War of a Thousand Years". The decadence, which was to remove her from a predominant role in European politics, had already set in. The Spanish conquest was rapacious. There was no urge to spread a superior culture, only the mundane desire to exploit mines and the native races. Exploitation was the watchword of the political and military oligarchy which governed Spain and which, by virtue of its power, was privileged to provision the colonies and to import the products of the colonies. This kind of conquest, determined by the economic condition of Spain, spelled disaster to the future of Latin America. This system left deep traces in the mentality of the governing class. It continues to this day, having taken the form of caudilloism--a kind of medieval European feudalism.

The time came when the less-mestizo, native Spanish did not wish to be excluded from certain privileges. This class saw the advantages of government and privilege which would accrue to them if they usurped the monopolistic pretensions of the Peninsula. Independence was the logical result of economic and political decadence in the Peninsula. That which North America considered a question of law and justice was a matter of privilege in South America. In North America there was a people; in South America there was a class. In North America there was a high ideal; in South America there was immediate necessity. Is there wonder then that the two systems produced different mentalities? The nineteenth century has been one of organization and education for Latin America, the beginning of an effort to set aside the feudal regime. Latin American countries have had to improvise political institutions even though their economic regimes were far from stable. It has been an endless task. There was the almost insuperable difficulty of preventing political institutions from becoming nothing more than a flimsy pretense. Most of the Latin countries were plunged into a kind of feudal anarchy. Civil wars, caudilloism, revolutions by political parties with vague political con-

cepts, economic and political anarchy have been caused by the colonial regime from which Latin American society has evolved.

During the first twenty years of Argentine national life (1810-1830), the lack of a well-knit economic system engendered a complete political anarchy. That was the reason for the strong-man politics of the era. Proprietors of land were lords of their dominions. In their hands rested political authority and economic privilege. The latifundio was the cause of caudilloism and the social institution which prevented a politically- and economically-important rural proletariat from rising. When trade began to take on an organized aspect, unorganized feudalism became organized feudalism. This concept is embodied in the person of Juan Manuel Rosas. The Argentine revolution had been managed by men of the city who cared little about the interests of the agricultural class. Hence the men of the campo had to dominate in the cities and to change the policies of government. For only in the city (Buenos Aires) was there access to the public treasury--which in the case of the Argentine was the customs. The obtaining of this power, the terror that reigned and the other historical incidents were just so much window dressing for historians to point to in describing "transcendental events." By using the wrong word in the right place many Argentine historians confuse themselves and others by calling feudalism federalism. It is easy to get confounded by the civil struggles which occurred in the early years of the Republic. What did the provinces really want? They wanted to share in the customs receipts. Portefios wanted customs duties for themselves so that they might exercise a financial and political hegemony over the rest of the Republic. That was the essential cause of the secession of Buenos Aires. In any event, predominant economic interests of the country were feudal. After the fall of Rosas the country adopted a federal constitution and continued to be an organized feudal system. The feudal class defined its interests and a great economic development began. The caudillo became the estanciero. The gaucho became the peon. Then a new force entered the national scene--the colono who was looked down upon by both the estanciero and the peon. Neither realized that a half century later the children of the immigrant colono would become the most important political force in the provinces in which they settled, especially in the provinces of the litoral. Basques and Frenchmen in Buenos Aires Province, Italians in Santa Fe, Entre Rios and Mendoza disputed the lordship of the criollo landholder and many of them acquired land. The feudal class in general tried to halt the pretensions of the foreign immigrants. The best laws passed during the past 40 years were of little avail against the political power of the latifundistas. Where agriculture did not penetrate, livestock raising took on a "mass production" aspect. Industries found hard sledding because of the scarcity of population. Commerce was subordinated to livestock farming. With the exception of the litoral, the country still continues to be dominated by feudalism.

Today every logical fact points toward a proletariat class, a proletariat in the sociological and political sense of the word. This proletariat will have its own interests and will be destined to oppose the conservative class. There are, therefore, three classes to be considered. There is the rural landed class, a highly conservative force. Secondly, there is the middle class, being born of capitalism. This class has secondary tendencies. On the one hand there is the industrialist-protectionist, and on the other there is the commercial-minded free-tradist. Centered more or less in Buenos Aires and with contact with the outside world, this class is likely to be of liberal persuasions. The proletariat must be both rural and industrial. The rural proletariat will for a long time be the political instrument of the conservatives. The industrial proletariat will tend toward socialism and will frame policies opposed to interest and income. The past century has been, all in all, a government of one class. All the civil struggles and political variations of them have been between oligarchies of the same class. Now capitalism is beginning to fight feudal privilege. It will be interesting to see where the aborning proletariat will align itself in fighting for concessions.

There have been two great immigrations in the past four centuries, both of them of Latin origin. It is surprising that the colono immigrants have become ardent Argentines and have assimilated the essential characteristics of the national mentality. Anglo-Saxons are excepted, a fact tending to accent the Latin spirit of the nationality. The Río de La Plata will be the center of a future Neo-Latin race which is being formed in the temperate zone of South America. The progressive economic and spiritual consolidation of the nations in this area--Uruguay, southern Brazil, central Argentina and central Chile--will become a factor of peaceful solidarity, a force for common betterment and a counter force against the excessive influence of foreign nations. The absorbing economic influence of English, German and Yankee imperialism is a natural result of dynamic economic developments. It is only natural for the big states to exercise economic influence over minor states. This phenomenon cannot be made to disappear by speeches and declamations. The only defense of South America against this influence is to coordinate the interests of the small states, making out of them an important economic power which can, in turn, exert its own influence. It need not surprise us that a nation like the United States with a highly complex society of tremendous collective functions should have, in its foreign relations, an imperialistic philosophy. The foreign policy of a nation can easily contradict its domestic political principles. The actual independence of Latin countries is more of form than fact. Another center of energy in the international scene is adolescent Japan. Who will deny that Argentina and Australia may come to have an important role in international affairs. Brazil and Chile will have much to do with the role we will play and will share our influence. There are certain factors which will determine the relative importance of Argentina, Brazil and Chile: Territorial extension, climate, natural riches and race. (Note that Uruguay is forgotten in the discussion). Chile lacks territorial extension and fertile soil. The climate of Brazil and her race problem weigh against her. Argentina combines all four important factors!

That then is the resume. There are many things which Ingenieros could not foresee or appreciate thirty and forty years ago, such as the dynamic impulses which are giving to Brazil a relatively greater significance and the fairer and much more effective United States Latin American policy. Nevertheless, his theories and explanations are highly regarded in the Argentine. His ideas about Argentine ambition for leadership in Latin America are certainly in keeping with fact and worthy of consideration by those who wish to understand Argentina.

As usual the docket for the week is rather full. I have two quizzes coming up, one on the general subject of communications and the other on the essential differences between the latifundio and the large estancias and the implications of both on Argentine social structure. Cramming for tests is a time-killer. Usually the day before the quizzes we students find ourselves thumbing through the Código Civil trying to hunt down some of the legal principles which have to do with the subjects. Thursday or Friday three North Americans are due to arrive and will stay for three or four days. They have been referred to me by Mr. Nyhus. I have a letter from one, J. A. Hopkins, who is a friend of Witt. These North Americans are making a rapid industrial survey of the Argentine under the auspices of the Corporación para la Promoción del Intercambio. I am booked for the regular Saturday-after-class mate and philosophy session of my student friends. Winter is here. There is snow in the sierras. The mercury has gone as low as the freezing point in Córdoba, a barbaric cold, so say the natives. There is no heating system worth the name in this place of lodging. As I write this letter, I am somehow keeping my hands free of a wool blanket in which I am bundled. I have a notion to slit the blanket in the middle and make of it a poncho!

Sincerely,

Francis Herron