

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

The City Hotel  
Córdoba, Córdoba  
June 20, 1942

Dear Mr. Rogers:

That United States college extra-curricular activity, the Bull Session, was duly introduced this week at the University of Córdoba at the suggestion of Dr. Carl C. Taylor, rural sociologist of the Department of Agriculture, who is making a year's survey of the Argentine. Dr. Taylor visited Córdoba in order to view university life as it exists in the heart of the Argentine and to see at first hand the workings of a colonial university which has a tradition almost as old as the history of America. The Bull Session--which we translated as a Sesión de Charla--has no parallel in Córdoba and was, I feel, introduced with some success. There were several meetings with professors and discussions with students of the University, but there was really only one Bull Session. Attending were Dr. Taylor, his special research student who is a fourth year law student at the University of Buenos Aires, three students of the University of Córdoba and myself. The talk-fest began at 10 o'clock in the evening and ended at 3 o'clock in the morning--a short enough session by North American standards but an affair singular in nature and phenomenally long by Argentine standards. I am giving an account of the session because I am certain that the students spoke their thoughts spontaneously, and as you will see did not pull their punches when the subject at hand concerned the United States.

There was the danger that the spontaneous quality would be lacking and that the students, finding themselves in a strange situation, would not take the world apart and then try to put it back together in accordance with their beliefs. Argentines have a habit of being too polite. For example, they will not go through a door first and often insist on creating an impasse by requiring everyone to pass before them. They seem reluctant to sit down even at invitation. We warned the students before the Bull Session that everything would be according to United States rules. Dr. Taylor and I, in accordance with our traditions, were the first to dispose ourselves comfortably. Dr. Taylor selected an easy chair and lit his pipe. I chose the bed with the most pillow props. Then we invited our Argentine friends to find a seat before they were all gone. I left myself open for a couple of humorous comments which did not advantage me and the Bull Session was off in a roar of discussion. As I look back over that session, there is one part of it which stands out and which I have tried, as well as my uncertain memory can do so, to reconstruct. It was the problem of war, which Dr. Taylor posed; not the problem of The War, but war as a recurring phenomenon.

It was not strange, perhaps, that a consideration of war as an abstract kind of phenomenon soon lent itself to an examination of cases and to an appraisal of The War. War, these Córdoba students agreed, would be inevitable forever unless tariff protection and restrictions of all kinds were relegated to limbo, allowing nations by some kind of evolution to effect a community of the world. War, in their view, had purely economic reasons. The United States, they said, no less than other nations has contributed to the condition which has caused The War to be. The role of the United States has an importance to us, they said, for the United States is the foremost promoter of Pan-Americanism. Pan-Americanism simply means America for the North Americans. How can the United States pretend that Pan-Americanism means anything else until certain of its Latin-American policies are changed? We shall not sidestep the issue, but will let you have our meaning clear. Why cannot Argentine agricultural products compete equally with North American agricultural goods in the North American domestic market? We mean corn, wheat, flax. We mean wheat. We mean everything. The fiebre aftosa argument is a dodge, and our minds are closed to the arguments which you

would submit to us, for we consider them to be specious and born of your domestic politics. We fail to see the idealism of United States Pan-Americanism. The United States practices idealism and high principles when it advances its own interests to do so. The United States thinks of the Caribbean Sea as a Yankee Lake. The United States and its people are haughty, proud and arrogant--afflicted with a superiority complex. (What a pertinent charge that is against the United States and United States citizens, some of whom criticize the Argentine for having the same kind of complex!) What is the basis of this analysis? Dr. Taylor asked. It is sociologically understandable, the students said. The people of the United States were fortunate to find a big, rich country which developed rapidly and gave to its citizens fabulous material comforts--comforts and riches which have been broadcast far and wide in a typical North American way as the highest standard of living in the world. The people of the United States, from what we have been able to gather, actually believe that the greatness of their country is due to their brains, their enterprise and their superiority. Another superior race! That kind of nonsense does not obtain a sympathetic reception in Two of the Three Americas. Latin America, and especially Argentina, does not wish to be looked down upon.

Dr. Taylor asked the students if it were not true that Argentina looked at itself, in its South American sphere, much like the students said the United States looked at itself in the sphere of the Three Americas. Yes, they agreed, but with one difference. The Argentine has a record of integrity. Bueno, Dr. Taylor countered, if we are such an empire-minded, materialistic-seeking group of people why have we not sent our armies to dominate Canada, Mexico and, at the very least, the Republics of the Yankee Lake! The North American Republic has the sharpest, most-effective, long-range foreign policy of any nation in the world, the students replied. The United States depends on economic penetration, not military control. There is one distinctive difference between the United States and Germany, although basically their aims are the same. Germany has a mistaken, ill-advised policy. Although Germany conquer the world, the history of the German empire will be ephemeral. People will not submit to military control. An empire so-built and so-maintained cannot long endure. Germany is impelled by a psychology of vengeance which was in great part created by the humiliating Treaty of Versailles. But back to the theme. It is impossible to subjugate people and it is impossible to make a profit out of an economic empire if military forces have to police that empire. In a word, economics is about the most important thing in the life of individuals and nations. Patriotism, said two of the students, is caused by economic reasons and does not result because of "spiritual" considerations. What is this economic force? Dr. Taylor asked. The Córdoba students thought of it as something which, if it did not comprise biological, psychological and other forces, certainly had an important effect upon them. Dr. Taylor pointed out that millions of young men were now marching to war, taking part in an activity which may have a profound effect on their lives and which may even be their destiny. These young men are impelled by psychological factors, not economic factors, he said. No, the Córdoba students replied, for the war was caused by economics. Dr. Taylor then pointed out that the great wealth of the world, the heritage which is of the ages, is not economic. Literature, art, the music of Wagner, the paintings of Michael Angelo and the teachings of Christ were not economic. The definition of economics of two of the students was a vast, nebulous theory--if not comprising everything in its meaning, than almost everything. It is true that an economic factor at one given time may have an important effect on an individual or a nation, Dr. Taylor pointed out. So, too, may other factors have that same kind of effect. But life itself is a symphony. The relative importance of the influences on life can hardly be measured.

Being a sociologist, Dr. Taylor is interested in the progress being made with the science in the Argentine. Sociology departments in Argentine universities are under the Schools of Law. Head of the Sociology Department of the

University of Córdoba is Dr. Alfredo Povifia who is one of the best-known sociologists of the Argentine and an authority on Latin-American sociology. I had the privilege to attend the meeting which Dr. Taylor had with Dr. Povifia. Argentine sociology, according to Dr. Povifia, is mostly theoretical. North American theories are more popular than those of other countries. Classical sociological theory is not held in high repute. Sociology is just beginning to receive some recognition in the Argentine. The six universities of the Republic have courses. Argentine sociologists are examining the theories which appear most adaptable to the Argentine, but have made little effort to examine Argentine social structure by practical, sociological methods. In Buenos Aires and Córdoba some surveys have been made. The government shows no interest in sociology as a science which can contribute to social welfare. There have been no foundations established, nor has the government made available funds for research work. Sociology is hampered in the universities because sociology departments do not wish to invade the fields of economics, political science, etc. This reluctance to expand the field of sociology results from the fact that the Argentine university has not had the same kind of evolution as the North American university. The United States university had a cultural beginning. From the general it developed to the specific. The Argentine university is divided into particular branches which are more or less independent of one another. Even the Colegios Nacionales, or high schools, carry out this feature. To enter a normal school one must go to a different Colegio Nacional than if one wishes to enter a law school. In the School of Economic Sciences, for example, there are no courses in literature or philosophy. Law students do not study sciences or languages. And so on. Dr. Povifia was surprised by the vast, practical research program which Dr. Taylor is carrying out in the Argentine--a kind of survey that no Argentine has ever attempted. Dr. Taylor believes that the quickest way for sociology to get recognition is for it to contribute something of value. He suggested that to Dr. Povifia.

Dr. Taylor is an intensely interesting personality. He is Iowa-born, a graduate of Drake University and a former professor of the University of Missouri. Like most men of ability he has the faculty of being able to reduce theory to the simple. To Dr. Taylor the world is a laboratory. To him sociology is mostly the accurate counting of noses. He sees little reason for struggling with complicated theory and making wordy conclusions when one can go and find out facts. There seemed to be a feeling of wonderment and some mental head-shaking in University circles here when it was discovered that such an important and well-prepared man as Dr. Taylor actually had been to the Chaco and was going to make field trips to every region of the Argentine so that he might talk with the common man and see how he lived. It was suggested that information was not to be obtained easily from the ordinary chacarero, colono or peon and that, anyhow, those people did not have a "conciencia." It is too early to say, but I shall not be surprised if Dr. Taylor's survey shows the rural proletariat to have a conciencia much beyond that which the intelligensia imagines. Dr. Taylor on one occasion suggested that it was easier to obtain information from the man in an ordinary walk of life than from the cultured person. One of the University professors inquired of me if Dr. Taylor had made arrangements to meet the Governor of Córdoba. I suggested that Dr. Taylor's time was limited and that he wanted to talk with students, ordinary people, even beggars. I then told him how at Dr. Taylor's insistence we questioned a beggar woman. What in the world did Dr. Taylor ask the beggar woman? the incredulous professor inquired. I detailed the questions: Did the woman have any relatives? What kind of home did she live in? Did she need money to buy food? Did the government help the poor? Was her only hope for the future the Almighty? And at the end of these and other questions, I told the professor, Dr. Taylor gave the woman a peso note. And when I told him that, the professor gave up. He did not understand the queer mentality of these North Americans.

Also in Córdoba at the same time were Dr. John Hopkins, economics professor on leave from Iowa State College, and two other North Americans who are making a

survey for the Corporation to Promote Trade. Dr. Hopkins found some time to visit the University and to talk with professors and students. Among other things, Dr. Hopkins was interested in teaching methods, economic research and research technique, the content of courses. He and his associates are working with an agency of the Banco Central, the Federal Reserve Bank of the Argentine. They are surveying Argentine industry with an eye to its possibilities. They are looking at Argentine trade difficulties and searching for solutions. The war has complicated Argentine trade. Argentina has more or less adopted the "swap" policy of European countries, trading lira for lira, peseta for peseta and dollar for dollar. Because of the war Argentina has lost many of her traditional markets. Naturally she is trying to develop her industries and to develop trade which will partly compensate her for that which she has lost. There are many, many problems--of which the least is not shipping space. When Hopkins and his colleagues have completed their survey, they will have the best picture available of the effect of the war upon Argentine industry and will know the trends in Argentine economics.

The visit of the North Americans and the opportunity it offered me to practice United States talk again had a stimulating effect. I have been almost continuously isolated from English-speaking people since arriving in Córdoba. Some English friends in other parts of the Republic gave me introductions to their friends here, but I have not used them. North Americans who come to Córdoba usually are only passing through, or at the best guests for only a few days. According to Cordobese citizens whose ancestors arrived before the Virreinato of the Plate was established, we are suffering the coldest weather ever. Yesterday it was 8 below zero Centigrade, just about right to freeze an ice pond. Never have I seen such a shivering city of people. Heating systems are practically unknown. My friends feel the thickness of my North American overcoat with some envy and remark that they are going home so that they can go to bed. For, as it is said here: "The stove of the poor is their bed."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Francis Herron". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name "Francis Herron".