

NOT an association of Easterners, or Southerners, or Westerners, or Northerners, working for the advancement or the security of any particular section of the country. It is NOT an organization dedicated to the good of any one color, or nationality, or creed. Rather it is an American organization in which every decent, patriotic American who has rallied to his country's assistance is eligible and welcome—it is an organization where white and colored, Gentile and Jew—where persons of all denominations mingle on an equal basis and work towards a common good, just as all those separate elements once responded with equal ardor and love of country, and fought together that the ideals of democracy upon which this country is founded might be preserved to the world.

Today, with the War that was to end all wars twenty years behind us, the American Legion assumes a tremendous significance in the life, and for the future, of our country that it could never have assumed during the earlier years of its existence, because then there was not the need for the influence of the Legion that there is today.

Fortunate are we, indeed, that we are not situated as are the nations of Europe, with enemies or potential enemies crowding our borders, and with our thickly populated cities open to devastating assault from the air by almost any nation on the continent that might find it to their interest to declare war upon us. Fortunate, indeed, are we to have as a neighbor to the North a country like Canada, whose outlook on life is similar to ours, a country which seeks nothing that we possess, just as we seek nothing that she possesses.

Fortunate as we are in such respects, however, let us not deceive ourselves that we are entirely free from the dangers of one kind or another that menace practically every nation in the world at the moment. Wherever trouble has spouted, it did not just happen overnight, without any apparent reason. In each of the countries where totalitarian doctrines now rule, for instance, there were subversive forces at work for months and even years before the final explosion took place, sowing the seeds of discord, preparing the field for the crop of distrust and violent dissatisfaction that always precede the overturning of an established government. Don't let us try to deceive ourselves that we are free from such disturbing influences.

These forces are busily at work in our own country today, and they have made great progress during the past ten years, feeding upon the deprivations and miseries that resulted from the business depression of 1929. We read about them continually, we learn about them to our sorrow sometimes after we see the result of their efforts in disastrous strikes, in sabotage aboard our ships, in subversive campaigns that are carried on within our schools and colleges, sometimes cleverly financed by our own public funds. We must be vigilant, now more than ever before in the history of these United States, to detect and stop such movements before they can accomplish their aims. Gladly do I acclaim the American Legion as one of the most potent of the means at our command to fight the good fight of Democracy and free institutions, against the "All for the State" policy that self-seeking individuals and groups will impose upon us unless we keep everlastingly upon our guard.

Tonight, as Legionnaire, and as the Chief Executive of a great State that as much as any of the States of the Union, has valued and fought for its priceless heritage of freedom—a state that has resolutely and continuously