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MONTGOMERY LECTURESHIP

ON CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATION

Daniel Cosío Villegas

CHANGE IN LATIN AMERICA:

The Mexican and Cuban Revolutions

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

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Latin America: Its Inner Structure

The Mexican Revolution, Then and Now

Latin America and the United States, Now and Tomorrow

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A HELPFUL STARTING POINT would be the statement that Latin America has not progressed as much as it should and could. To progress means to go forward, and this implies the existence of a goal that will indicate at any time if there has been an advancement, a stalling or a reversal.

What goal should we use in judging Latin America? North Americans, victims of an accounting mania, have tried at different times to "measure" the progress of Latin America* and have naturally concluded that it has been slow and meager. They have, for instance, counted the population or appraised the volume and value of production, exports, imports, etc., in order to measure economic progress; and they have estimated social improvement by counting school enrollment or even

*See, for example: Fitzgibbon and Wooton, *Latin America, Past and Present*. New York, 1946.

the number of inhabitants per hospital bed, washing machine, telephone or automobile.

To my mind, these systems of measurement are mistaken, for the following two reasons, among many others: first, because if they are applied to relatively recent times, the right conclusion would be that Latin America has progressed at an incredible rate. Mexico, for instance, established twenty-five thousand rural schools in the twenty-five years following 1922 and built an average of fifteen hospitals a year from 1930 to 1945. So it may be correctly assumed that our countries have advanced during the last thirty or forty years at the same feverish pace as the North American Middle West developed a century ago. Second, because even if the time may be near when we shall have to accept the North American man as a standard for measuring everything, up to now the standard is man alone, which means that community progress must be measured in terms of its own and not outside standards.

As far as I am concerned, it is not possible to measure the kind of progress I have in mind on a simply material or economic or even so-called social level, but only on a general human level. I believe that the only standard for measuring this type of progress is the degree to which men share life. This living together depends in large part on the material welfare people enjoy; but not all human fellowship depends on it, as may be demonstrated in the Argentina of Perón.

There is something that I have always found remarkable in Latin America: man's detachment, his solitude, as regards his fellow men. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," says the Gospel; but among us we find no neighbor; distance is great and we are not akin.

Actually, in Latin America there has always been too much land for man: "The land is broad and alien," the Peruvian

novelist could say; ours is an "empty continent," says a Mexican writer; and the Argentine expression "populated solitude" has lost its identity through constant repetition.

The truth is that geographers* speak of the population pattern in Latin America as the very elementary one of the "isolated cluster": a group of people here, another there, and in between only the emptiness of a neutral land where no man lives, much less shares his life with others. It is not only that these groups of people are surrounded by emptiness, but that each group—whatever its extent or location—is dense at its center, thinning out progressively towards its borders. This means that for the present and many years to come there is no hope that they will spread, fusing into one another and thus increasing the area where human life is shared. That is why geographers claim that in all the territory of Latin America there are barely four regions of "healthy" population growth; that is, regions where the center is expanding without draining off the population of its borders: the highlands of Costa Rica and Colombia, the Central Valley of Chile, and the southern Brazilian states.

The clustered population pattern has many and very curious consequences. The first has already been pointed out: the lack of contact between men of one cluster and men of other clusters. The second is that the country or nation becomes to a certain extent a fictitious entity or, if you like, an imperfect reality, because, strictly speaking, a nation should not only have the territorial continuity cited by legal scholars as a characteristic of the state, but it should have population continuity. The third is that each group of people creates its own institutions and services, with obvious waste of time and effort, so that a kind of cloister is created which is economi-

*See Preston, E. James' excellent *Latin America* (New York: Odyssey Press, 1942).

cally, politically, socially and even spiritually self sufficient. Finally, the larger group of people attempts to rule the smaller ones; but as all these groups are cloistered, the latter do not know why the former have to impose laws and customs on them. And the laws and customs are imposed through violence, more or less destructive, more or less permanent. That ignorance is understandable: if the human body accepts the supremacy of the heart, it is because the heart serves the whole body; it sends pure red blood throughout the body and collects that which is poisoned. The heart is the ruler because it performs two functions in the body which are not only general but may be called sacred: it nourishes and purifies. Why should a distant and isolated cluster attempt to govern other distant and isolated clusters? Why, if their peoples do not live together? Simply because one of them is larger or stronger or because it is located in a dominant position on the highland or coast? The truth is that communications, power, and force are concentrated in the larger cluster and that cluster tries to use power and force for its own benefit and not for the benefit of all the clusters.

It is hardly necessary to say that if our population patterns are indeed clustered, there must be very serious reasons for this. Almost all the land of Latin America is unyielding, so much so that there is no country, with the possible exception of Uruguay, in which the mere passage of time will make it possible to easily accomplish the progressive settlement and good use of the land. In Mexico, for example, the North-Central section is desert, with little or no hope of remedy, even disregarding the cost of possible artificial solutions; the great Central plateau is dependent on insufficient and irregular rainfall; the Gulf coast and the South towards Guatemala are essentially tropical, hot, humid, intensely fertile and unhealthy. The country, in fact, can make use of only small

isolated valleys on the great Central plateau and rich plains in the Northwestern section. We shall not mention the tangle of mountain ranges and peaks that cut up the country into little pieces. This geographical description of Mexico is essentially valid for Central America and other Caribbean countries. Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile are victims of the colossal Andean range which, indeed, is a perpetual source of literary inspiration. And although the Colombian has excellent highlands and mountain slopes which he inhabits and works with gratifying success, he struggles against the mountain which devours time and effort in the transportation of men and goods; in the Northeastern section of his country, the Colombian has such a thick jungle that the mere idea that a human being might sometime be trapped there is terrifying. Brazil, too, has a jungle and does not lack a desert; and, in addition, covering its center, is the well-named Amazon Basin. Ecuador and Peru also have intractable tropical forests and stark deserts. Half of Chile's territory is desert; in Argentina not all is pampas, much less humid pampas; there is also desert and a Patagonia which allows itself to be inhabited only if the human wolf disguises himself as a sheep.

The tragedy is that within those inhospitable lands is found a great deal of the wealth that the man of Latin America needs for his support: the Bolivian and Peruvian Indians have to climb four thousand meters to wrest from the mountains the tin and copper they sell in order to supply themselves with corn and wheat. So harsh geography compels the population to concentrate in less rigorous areas, isolating the inhabited regions from one another.

As always happens, there are some advantages to this cluster type of population increase. Although human fellowship is sometimes pleasant and always useful, it should not be as oppressive as it is in Europe. There man feels that it is imposed upon him, that he is forced to live side by side with his

fellowmen as though he were in a convict's file being conducted to prison or exile. One of the things that makes the human climate of Latin America healthier is that men have always had enough land to cultivate and fresh air to breathe. Unfortunately, they are now so widely separated that the separation becomes an arid desert creating solitude and helplessness.

It is true that enormous progress has been made in the settlement and cultivation of land. For example, it is impressive to reconstruct on today's map the regions inhabited by the Indians at the time of the Discovery and Conquest. Three-fourths of the total population was concentrated in the narrow strips occupied by the great Maya, Aztec and Inca civilizations, as well as by the less advanced Chibcha. The rest of our immense territory was uninhabited or was occupied only by scattered and disorganized tribes. Today our population is much larger and more closely grouped. The distances and obstacles that separate the population nuclei have diminished. Nevertheless, neither Latin America as a whole nor any of its individual countries has succeeded in repeating the North American achievement of occupying and subduing so large a territory in scarcely one and half centuries. And in addition, all the Latin American countries are still far from arriving at such an achievement and some show no signs of ever getting there.

The land's recalcitrance largely explains its partial settlement and conquest; partial settlement and conquest explain the population pattern of the cluster; and, in turn, that pattern partly explains what is most important—the limited degree to which men in Latin America live together. But we cannot explain in this way why human fellowship should continue to be limited and inadequate within an enclosure, call it a nation, a province or a village. The reasons for this

are just as evident and equally profound, but of a very different nature: it is not Nature that alienates man from man, but man himself. Spanish Americans must be very foolish not to have learned to live together successfully with their fellowmen, in spite of the fact that they are doomed to share the same enclosures. It is obvious that a monk, physically encloistered, makes the greatest possible effort to get along with those with whom he has to spend his entire life. Nevertheless, it appears that the Spanish American man has not tried as resolutely as he should, or that he has failed in good measure when he has tried.

To verify this it is enough to regard the social structure of any one of our countries, and unfortunately, there seem to be no exceptions, not even of degree. None of them has a middle class—at least not a middle class which is sufficiently numerous and solid to alleviate the painful contrast between the immeasurably poor lower class and the immeasurably wealthy upper class. Perhaps these two classes are alike only in their impenetrable ignorance; in every other respect, they cannot be more different or distant. And I insist that we must not disguise the hateful cleavage that separates our lower and upper classes. The superficial observer tends to behold the mote in his brother's eye, but not the beam in his own. For that reason it is frequently believed by those who belong to countries in which European dress prevails that social distance is less great in their countries and more so in those with an Indian population, simply because in the latter the "color" of a picturesque costume is added to the social distance.

Of course, there is no modern society in which social differences do not exist. They are even self-evident. But ours seem to me to be greater and more damaging, as if they poisoned the whole social body, driving it to periodical violent convulsions, among other reasons, because Latin America is expected to furnish all its peoples with ample space, air, light

and sufficient food and shelter. And speaking of social classes, we should not forget the phenomenon to which sociologists ascribe so much importance—vertical social mobility, that is, the greater or less facility with which a man of an inferior class is enabled to rise to a higher one.

As to our obvious and profound division of classes, I do not suppose it is necessary to speculate much in order to recognize it and feel its scope. It would suffice to imagine a Bolivian or Peruvian Indian on the one hand and a young gentleman from La Paz or Lima on the other; a Negro from Colombia's Caribbean coast and a wealthy industrialist of Antioquia; a Chilean *roto* and a "dandy" from Santiago's Union Club; a rich Mexican businessman with vacation homes in Cuernavaca, Taxco and Acapulco, and a nomadic Lacandon. Can any Spanish American be so naive as to think that even though social differences are great in our countries, they are less so than in Western Europe or in the United States, because we do not have a true aristocracy or a genuine industrial proletariat: the first, really arrogant; the second, not simply low, but downtrodden.

Perhaps our upper classes are not actually as high as the traditional European aristocracy or as the unbelievably wealthy North American, but we cannot deny that there is nothing in the world so low as an Indian of the Bolivian mountain plateau. But even if the first-mentioned is true, the fact does not speak in our favor. On the one hand, the European aristocracy is less aristocratic than is commonly believed, and consequently less high than it appears; on the other hand, its significance in public life is very small, so that it is no longer a standard of social comparison or a source of envy or rancour. It is, in fact, a restricted social group. In any case and precisely to the extent that it is a true aristocracy, it has had time to become refined and polished. Ours, on the contrary, is so recent, has developed so much before our very eyes, has been

so crudely formed with money as its sole ingredient and its wealth derived so directly from spoliation, official favoritism or chance, that it is not worthy of admiration and might even be completely ignored. To this we must add its general absence of good taste and refinement. Many of our Independence heroes were gentlemen of wealth; all over Latin America the upper middle class that came into existence during the second half of the nineteenth century was often cultured, generous and progressive; but the rich man of today is unforgivable, in whatever light he may be considered. It must be remembered that our aristocracy governs or has governed our countries directly or indirectly, and even where it has been combated, it does not accept the role of a mere social ornament, but is watching for the opportunity to return to power. In consequence, at best it must be mistrusted and at worst, it must be regarded as an enemy.

Our economic structure is, of course, another great obstacle to human fellowship in Latin America. If we accept the fact that our social composition is characterized by its profound division of classes, we must assume that much of that division has its origin in the disparity in economic means and opportunities. We see at the one extreme great wealth invested in farm land, real estate and recently in industry, making possible an easy carefree life of idleness; at the other extreme, we find a minimal and uncertain salary—on the one hand, a palace with private race course, as they say in Buenos Aires, and on the other, the well-known slum. And we must bear in mind that the evils of this type of organization produce effects that are increasingly generalized and intensified. In the twelfth century it did not mean the same thing to be poor as it does in the twentieth, because modern industry has inflamed man's greediness by displaying for him, in shop after shop, an infinite variety of merchandise, services, satisfactions and

pleasures—in brief, things that the man of another age could not even imagine and consequently could not crave. And man himself has changed through his own efforts or because of external circumstances. This century's man is not prepared to go on being poor or to tolerate at his side men who are his equals in all but riches. During many years, centuries, Christian religion was able to restrain man's material appetites or compensate him for his poverty. Today Christianity has lost that function forever and limits itself to the more modest one of furnishing wealth, even if illegally acquired, with an innocent air of simple good luck.

But there is a fact which is frequently forgotten when analyzing the peculiarities of the economic structures of our countries, a fact which also prevents greater fellowship among the men of Latin America—the dualism of primitive and extremely advanced economic forms and institutions. We are all acquainted with the brilliant poster of an American air service: a monster of the air flies through the skies of Peru or Bolivia at a speed of 500 kilometers an hour at an altitude of over 6,000 meters, while down on the sun-baked desert a few Indians with their troop of llamas gape upwards. In reality this American company, old procuress of imperialism, has been charitable with us Latin Americans because, without abusing the truth, it could have substituted for the llama another, more primitive, means of transportation—the Indian, who for centuries has carried and still carries goods and persons on his back.

This dualism of primitive and very advanced modern forms is evident, not only in transportation, but in every aspect of Latin America's economic life. In contrast with the famous Carretones factory where unique hand-blown Mexican glass is created, we have the modern plate glass factories of Monterrey; beside the sarape or hand-woven poncho, the great textile factories of Antioquia, São Paulo, Santiago or Orizaba; and in

Buenos Aires, beside the great department store where (according to the famous slogan) it is possible to buy everything "from a pin to a locomotive," is seen the horse cart peddler who daily sells vegetables to housewives and servants all over the city.

It is not easy for men who live in opposite economic worlds to share life. Can there be easy understanding between the man who carries his wheat or corn to market on his back and the man who receives by plane a spare part for his factory's machinery? In fact, we frequently find in Latin America groups of people who live within a strictly barter economy, while others move within an economy that is the result of the most advanced capitalism.

Social and economic differences among our peoples are so massive that they cannot be diminished or adjusted in a normal, tranquil, daily, let us say, mechanical way; there is no vertical social mobility or if there is it is insufficient, because means and opportunities for changing class or group are missing or insufficient. For example, means and opportunities to obtain an education which would somewhat compensate for humble social origin or poverty are tragically limited in our countries; schools are scarce; those that exist are concentrated in the great urban centers and are completely lacking or fast disappearing in the villages and rural communities. The effectiveness of the teaching in such schools as there are is quite reduced because of changeable philosophy, routine methods, meager resources, because they do not answer to the diverse vocations and interests of modern man, and because they lack a loftier inspiration, a gospel equal to the high task of salvation which they should undertake. Economic resources are perhaps even more limited because, to the fact that they are held by only a few individuals, must be added the poverty of the country itself. The rate of saving is very low and, therefore, credit is greatly restricted; it does not help the whole

country, but only the principal towns, and even there only those who already have a fortune, not those who are trying to build one.

Not only means but also opportunities are scarce. Societies like ours, so rigid as to be almost static, furnish hardly any opportunity to the individual who wants to change his station in life. For instance, compare the normal opportunities offered by such countries as the United States and Canada with those existing in Argentina or Brazil, the South American countries most resembling them. The history of the United States is full of bootblacks or newsboys who become tycoons. In our countries the most analagous case would be the demagogue or brigand who overnight becomes governor.

Let us summarize what has been said, because it is good occasionally to put order into chaos: the harshness of the land in Latin America forces the population to concentrate in milder regions, separating the different groups from one another and giving rise to the population pattern of the isolated cluster, which prevents or makes difficult the fellowship of men in one cluster with men of another. Within each cluster man's fellowship is deficient because of an economic and social structure that deeply divides men into classes or groups. This division persists because there are not enough means and opportunities to make it possible for men of a lower class to rise easily to a higher class or group.

Let us consider this last conclusion: in a society which is deeply divided into classes or groups and which does not offer normal means and opportunities for changing social position, men of inferior groups are faced with great opposition when they try to enter superior groups. Does that mean that they must surrender to this opposition and resign themselves to never rising in the social scale? This could have happened in societies far removed from modern times, but it cannot happen

in the societies of today, even in those as modest as ours.

What actually happens is very different and very regrettable. Since social changes do not take place with ease, normally, mechanically and daily, they occur at intervals of some twenty or thirty years; but then the change is radical in the sense that it is profound and total; it is violent, demolishing laws, institutions, habits and customs, often giving rise to a civil war. In brief, social change becomes revolution and sometimes reaches the proportions of a veritable cataclysm. For example, in the case of the Mexican Revolution which began in 1910, the country's population did not increase for the first time in its history, so that the 1920 census registered a net loss of 826,000 inhabitants; the landowner class, which held sixty to seventy percent of the country's entire wealth, disappeared; large professional groups—the executive and political personnel, the army, the body of university professors—were almost completely replaced; new social classes with a decisive political power emerged in the brand new collective owner of land, the industrial worker, a popular army and a new upper middle class, so new, so tender, so fragile that not one of the thousand millionaires we now have in Mexico has had his wealth for over twenty or thirty years. Those who are closely acquainted with the changes of this type that occur from time to time in our countries will not find my term "cataclysm" to be exaggerated.

We must still present, even in a sketchy and hasty fashion, the other great problem of Latin America—the constant strains and adjustments imposed on our countries by external factors.

In reality, although few men would dispute the statement that Latin American societies are as deeply affected as those of other countries by maladjustments, many would doubt that, first, those maladjustments are more fundamental; second, that

most or at least the more significant of them are due to forces originating in countries outside Latin America. In any case, the last statement is not concerned with the question of ethics or responsibility; it does not imply for an instant that our troubles are attributable to outside causes. On the contrary, they arise from this irremediable fact: once Latin America was "discovered" by Europe, it became subject to Western civilization but it did not completely enter into that civilization. Since that time, our life has been more than anything else a sustained effort to ascertain, at first, what Europe, and then what the United States, accomplishes in order to adapt those accomplishments to our own conditions of life.

We may say that it took us three centuries to assimilate the forms of the political, economic and social organization of Spain, its art, its religion, its language. The task was overwhelming because Spain was Latin America's first contact and because, besides being the first, it was undertaken completely with every aspect of a civilization which at the time was the most complex and dynamic in the world. But Spain, at the very moment of the Conquest or a little later, lost her leadership in Europe and ceased being the fountainhead of Western civilization. The Dutch from the middle of the seventeenth century, the French in the first part of the eighteenth, and the British from then all through the nineteenth, left Spain further and further behind until it became the typical country with its golden age in the past, a country where all times past were better than the present. That is why Spain, instead of originating changes and reforms, received them from Western Europe and transplanted them to Latin America, but they were always little and late, and sometimes very peculiarly conceived.

Owing partly to this circumstance, we may say that because of its first contact with Europe, Latin America was better able to make its adjustments during the period of its dependence

on Spain. Other factors also contributed toward making adjustment easier. On the one hand, the Europe of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was undoubtedly a society of continuous and profound changes, but not of rapid and revolutionary ones. For example, in the field of political organization, the 1688-89 English Revolution, originator of the modern parliamentary system, did not extend to the rest of Europe, as did the other three great revolutions which reached almost universal proportions: the United States' Independence, the French Revolution of 1789 and the Industrial Revolution. Notwithstanding their dates, these three actually initiated the nineteenth century and already belong to the present age. On the other hand, poor communications made it difficult for any changes, great or small, to spread. Ideas were transmitted by printed matter and to a very limited extent in Latin America. It is estimated that in Mexico, where Spanish Colonial culture flourished as nowhere else, the total number of publications printed during the three centuries of Spanish domination was about thirty thousand, or scarcely one hundred per year. In addition, land and sea transportation was extremely limited: the time required by Columbus' caravels for the voyage, to America was not noticeably shortened until the middle of the last century, when the famous Yankee Clipper crossed the North Atlantic.

The circumstances which spared us the urgency of adjustment to new conditions lost their validity as we advanced into the nineteenth century, the first of our independent life. On the one hand, long-established means of communication finally reached countries where they were formerly unknown; other means were perfected that improved or completed the already existing ones; and all of these means led to the instantaneous and incessant transmission of ideas and news. On the other hand, European society was steadily moving in the direction of technological and scientific progress, setting material wel-

fare as its goal in individual and public life. In this sphere, changes began to occur daily and their significance became increasingly profound and revolutionary. In addition, two new circumstances made themselves felt: our legacy from Spain was completely void of science and technology—precisely the fields where the most dynamic and well-endowed countries were working with the greatest zeal and success; and then Europe itself and, strangely enough, the Catholic Church did not realize until very late that a world as advanced as that which was creating the new science and technology could no longer fit into the moulds of traditional political, social and moral organization. And so it happened that Europe—and especially the United States—became for Latin America the source of the most astounding technological progress and at the same time the source of the most deplorable moral and political lag.

It is not surprising then that as the need to adjust to the changes in nineteenth century European society became more pressing, our capacity to achieve that end could not be increased without great delay and serious and irreparable damage.

And so we have spent the entire nineteenth century ruminating on economic and political liberalism, and not in the melancholy, peaceful attitude of the animal, but in the midst of thunder, sorrow, anguish, and violence. Liberalism has not achieved a complete victory in any country of Latin America, nor did it succeed even partially without war and bloodshed. Some day an intelligent man will do a study of the history of liberalism in Latin America; he will then see how painful its progress has been; he will see the contortions it has gone through in order to cleave its path, the comical deviations it has suffered on being transplanted to our medium, so different from that of Western Europe where it originated. And I have a premonition that such a scholar will not be able to avoid the

following conclusion: we inherited from Spain a central political organization, somewhat authoritarian, in which initiative and *ultima ratio* rested with the state. We abandoned our inherited ideas, institutions and experience in order to embrace liberal philosophy, according to which the state abstains and the individual is the sole motor and regulator, only to discover that by the turn of the last century there were signs of a return to a political organization similar to the one we received from Spain and which was repudiated by the best men of Latin America in order to keep up with modern Europe. It cannot be said that we have lost a century of our existence, but it may well be that we were victims of the illusion that a politico-economic philosophy has universal value simply because it is illuminated by the model countries in which it flourishes. Of course we were victims of such an illusion, first, because we associated liberal philosophy with our desire to be free of the domination of Spain and the Church; and second, in more general terms, because there seems to be no cure for the human tendency to attribute universal scope to the invention or experience of each man.

Latin America's lack of ability to evaluate the great transformations originating in the creative countries of the Western world, to detect their true significance, their final direction, their transient nature or relative permanence, is revealed in a phenomenon observed in Mexico since 1920 and to this very day in other Latin American countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Chile and Venezuela.

None of these countries noticed in time that the Industrial Revolution was coming to their lands (even though in jester's disguise)—a socio-economic revolution that implies the loss of power of the landowning oligarchy, and, consequently, the latter's desperate efforts to hold it back; the birth of a financial and industrial oligarchy destined to benefit at the expense of

the other and finally to replace it; but even more important, the transformation of a disorganized, submissive rural proletariat into an industrial urban one that is both aggressive and organized. These profound changes are the essence of all contemporary history in Western Europe; they have been accurately studied, step by step, in all their details and vicissitudes. Nonetheless, to my knowledge, not one Latin American statesman or intellectual took action or gave warning.

Our unfortunate Latin America is always trailing behind and does not even profit by avoiding the precipice into which others have so tragically and spectacularly fallen. For me, the most interesting recent political phenomenon in Latin America is one which took place years ago, after the First World War, in Italy, then in Germany and Portugal, and immediately afterward in Spain, France and Poland, although these last two countries did not feel its full impact because of the outbreak of the Second World War. Although not identical, the cases are similar and are cited for that reason.

In reality, this phenomenon appears in Latin America as follows: the groups of leaders who are the most capable administrators have ended up as those of least political vision because they have not realized in time—and some still do not suspect—the existence of changes which have been operating in their countries during recent years. These changes are essentially two; and one is the older. The first is a gradual disillusionment with liberal and democratic formulas and methods of government; the second is the birth and growth of an industrial proletariat and, in several countries, a new youth movement. This has resulted in the existence of large popular groups consumed by dissatisfaction and so completely disoriented politically that they fall easy prey to the first agitator who attracts their attention. There is a saying that may be grotesque, but which is very enlightening: "Liberal leaders have no more sex appeal for the masses."

This phenomenon has been clearly demonstrated in Argentina; but I find it no less clear in Colombia. Argentine radicals, who for many years have represented the liberal trend, no longer have any of the "sex appeal" that they possessed at the peak of their power during the first government of Irigoyen. This is so true that it was useless to search for a name or a man to salvage radicalism from its gray monotony: any Tamborini sounded like any Mosca, and any Mosca seemed to act like any Tamborini. And could Mr. Turbay's name mean anything new in Colombia? At best, he was liberalism's dark horse and, at worst, not a dark horse but a dark omen. In the course of a long, exhausting political career, he had evolved from an extreme liberal to a traditional liberal, in other words, to a man who expresses himself clearly only about the problems of the rich, but who keeps silent or at least becomes cautious about the problems of the poor.

But we must admit that the masses who followed Perón to his triumph and rejected the Liberal Party in favor of Gaitán did not move, nor are they moving, to the right. All to the contrary: they fell into a tragic trap because they were seeking and eager for improvement, change and progress—in brief, the "leftist" meaning of life, which they did not find in the other traditional, worn out, camp. And as in the romantic novel, a man brought about their downfall—a real, tangible man who inspires more confidence in the masses than depersonalized, cold institutions.

Since no one gave warning in time, Mexico had to suffer a long and bloody revolution that fortunately "brought it up to date," at least for a day; Brazil plunged into apathy and confusion, of which its own jungle can barely furnish an idea; Argentina fell into the trap of a demagogy so false and cheap that the next fifty years of its future may have been sacrificed; Peru sank again into the shadows of the last fifty years; Venezuela lost the opportunity to accelerate its progress, since it

could not continue the pacific methods with which it began so enthusiastically; Colombia had to resort to the assassination of its modern demagogue in order to gain a respite. All these countries have to return to what they abandoned ten or fifteen years ago—ten or fifteen years needlessly wasted.

Summing up, Latin America seems to me to face many problems, but two of them are so great that the tempo of our progress depends largely on their solution: one is its low degree of human fellowship; the other is its need to recognize and take advantage of the course of Western civilization and history in order to shorten the road ahead of us.

I would not be surprised if my readers should object in part or entirely to what I have said in these notes; but I am positive that everyone, tired of the gloomy tone—more often insincere than honest—that life is taking on at present, will irately demand: And what is the remedy to all this?

Conquering my natural shyness, I must confess that I have always thought that division of labor makes some men feel more secure in analyzing problems than in advising solutions; but if I for once have to venture into the field of the herb doctor or the sorcerer, I would hazard two conclusions and two remedies.

Government is the greatest power in modern society; our lives, individual and collective, already depend on it to an incredible extent and will depend on it even more. Therefore, a good government is today the greatest need of any country, and in order to achieve the best government possible, no citizen should scorn participation in "public life."

Latin American countries belong to the sphere of Western civilization, but more in the material and political fields than in the cultural, a situation which will be accentuated by the present supremacy of North America. Since our membership in this civilization is more passive than active, we have a

tendency both to thoughtless imitation and to disdain of "the lessons of history." It is imperative that Latin America believe in its own creative genius and exercise great care in its selection of innovations from abroad.

2 / The Mexican Revolution, Then and Now

I SINCERELY BELIEVE that the Mexican people have long known that the Mexican Revolution is dead, although they do not know, or only half understand, why this fact is concealed instead of being proclaimed. Therefore, the question arose some time ago: If it is dead, why have the death notices not been circulated? Why, more exactly, has the Mexican Revolution not been buried in the Rotunda of the Great, or perhaps in the Monument to the Mexican Revolution, where two of its heros, Francisco Madero and Venustiano Carranza, already lie?

This lack of good manners in a people who boast of being paragons of courtesy—"as polite as a Mexican Indian," said Vicente Espinel in 1618—may be easily explained and even justified. Making public the death of someone arouses everyone's curiosity as to the inheritance left by the dead person, and excites his relatives—legitimate or spurious—to mistrust and resentment, if not to a battle to the death, a manner of speaking appropriate to a discussion of a dead person and of a

death. The Mexican Revolution actually gave to the country, and especially to its leaders, an ideology and a language, and, so long as no new ideas and expressions appear, it is easier—and perhaps it has been indispensable—to continue governing with the old ideology and language. A popular saying is that it is better to endure a known evil than to risk an unknown good; so here it may perhaps be said that it is better to endure a known dead person than to risk an unknown live one.

Two attitudes very common among today's old-time Mexicans could have lead to the suspicion that there was some truth in the rumors that the Revolution was dead. One of these is a tendency to proclaim to high heaven the virtues of the Mexican Revolution and to bury as deep as possible its faults. The other is to assert that it burst out of nothing, thus magnifying the breadth of its accomplishments and the brilliance of its eminence. Apart from the fact that it is very normal, very healthy and very human to find consolation in recalling lost felicity, it may be truly maintained that the Mexican Revolution was a social, economic and political movement of extraordinary magnitude and depth, in addition to having a good deal more originality than the Mexicans themselves grant it. And it is also largely true that its origins were very modest, so much so that hardly any ideologists were responsible for its conception.

In order to estimate the magnitude and originality of the Mexican Revolution it will suffice to recall, on the one hand, the scope of its destructive force, and, on the other hand, comparable movements in other places.

In effect, it totally swept away not only the political regime of Porfirio Díaz but all of Porfirian society, that is, the social classes or groups together with their ideas, tastes and manners. Not only the commanders-in-chief of the army but their officers and all the soldiers disappeared without exception. Landholders, urban and especially agricultural, were almost entirely

replaced by new ones. Not one of the great newspapers survived. Only two out of about fifty banks continued into the new regime. Official bureaucracy—federal, state and municipal—was wholly reformed. Moreover, let us remember that in no other Latin American country has an event of such magnitude occurred in the last hundred years, except now in Cuba. Strictly speaking, I believe that the only three changes to surpass it in extent and depth are the communist revolutions of Russia and China, and perhaps in Cuba. But even as regards these three, it may be stated that the Mexican Revolution was the first political regime to achieve power and deny the validity of liberal political philosophy in order to give to the State the role of principal promoter of the nation's material and moral well-being. Speaking broadly and somewhat ironically, liberalism supposes that if you allow rich people to become richer, and richer people the richest, the poorest people may in time become simply poor—just as when it rains heavily at the top of a mountain, the valley far below will eventually receive some additional humidity. The Mexican Revolutionists believed in the early stages that rich people should not be allowed to become richer, and that all the power and resources of the State should be applied to the benefit of the poor.

Its humble origins may be expressed in a word. The Mexican Revolution, in reality, lacked great ideologists to shape it intellectually. The contribution of the so-called forerunners—especially, Flores Magón and his associates—and even of later figures such as Luis Cabrera, was of far greater moral than ideological value. It was not so much their ideas which were noteworthy as the time at which they were expressed, when almost no one protested against or disagreed with the regime then in power. There were few ideas, and most of them were critical of the failures of the Díaz regime rather than marking out the new course that the country should follow in order to improve its lot permanently. In addition, there was the un-

fortunate circumstance that the Flores Magón group, which had entered the revolutionary struggle earlier, could not get along with Francisco I. Madero's group, which really initiated the revolution and was to carry it to victory. And so the former had little or no influence in the military campaign and still less in the course afterwards followed by the Revolution. Although it was not always clearly stated, it seems to me that the ideological contribution of Madero was a great deal more important than is generally recognized. But even so, it was limited from the moment it was conceived, and in reality it was almost completely lost. Madero, in any case, upheld an important idea: No reform of any kind was feasible without a prior political change. He expressed this idea with the slogan of "effective suffrage and no re-election", which now seems narrow and even childish. It may be truly considered as a reaffirmation of the political principles on which all democracy is based: popular election and a time limit to the power of the elected governor.

As a matter of fact, the Mexican Revolutionists first tried to define their goals formally when the 1917 Constitution was drawn up. The history of this episode is all the more interesting in that the Carranza government offered the Constitutional Congress of Querétaro, as an aid in preparing its work, Francisco Zarco's *History of the Constitutional Congress of 1857* in a new edition which omitted Ponciano Arriaga's views on the bad distribution and worse use of land in Mexico. These two facts suggest that at least the Carranza group, then the most powerful, hoped that the new Constitution would simply be a revision of the old one, a revision that would be justified by the experience of the country during the sixty years the 1857 Constitution had been in force.

Nonetheless, two events took place in the Querétaro Congress which Carranza and his group apparently did not foresee. The Revolution's lack of ideologists is confirmed by the fact

that the greatest technical-juridical influence on the writing of the new constitutional text turned out to be the book *The Constitution and the Dictatorship*. Its author, Emilio Rabasa, was beyond doubt a great jurist, a good writer and a persuasive and intelligent person. But he was also a bitter critic of the 1857 Constitution, a liberal who was committed to the reactionary regime of Porfirio Díaz, and he certainly lacked any revolutionary ideas or inclinations.

The predominant influence of Rabasa resulted in the enlarging of the powers of the executive branch at the expense of the many powers which the previous Constitution had given to the legislative branch. In this way, Mexico passed into a presidentialist regime, but not precisely because the revolutionaries believed that their idea of the State as principal promoter of public well-being required a strong and alert executive endowed with the legal authority to take prompt and direct action. The form of the new regime was actually suggested by a reactionary who wished to give posthumous justification to the dictatorial government of Porfirio Díaz. The other result of Rabasa's influence was perhaps beneficial. The critical tone of his book made the 1917 constituents see less merit in the work of their colleagues of 1857, so they felt fewer scruples at drawing away from it.

The other important event of the Querétaro Constitutional Congress could be foreseen by Carranza. It was literally impossible that a revolutionary movement which had succeeded in overthrowing the Porfirian dictatorship—decrepit, it is true, but upheld by enormous and deep-rooted interests, within and outside the country—and which had emerged stronger and more combative from the Huerta counterrevolution, would be content with revising here and there a law which, whatever may have been its initial merits, had been incapable of preventing or even restraining the longest and most thorough dictatorship that the country had ever suffered. On the other

hand, the constitutional text drawn up by those men of Querétaro was to serve as a pattern for the immediate future life of the country, and the pattern could channel, but also limit or shackle, any new, revitalizing—in short, revolutionary—force. A small group of constituents was determined to insert something new into the Constitution. Against an apparently general wave of feeling, it finally achieved the approval of Articles 3, 27, 123 and 130.

The essential meaning of Article 27 is that the economic interests of the State or of the Nation are above the interests of individuals or of groups, and therefore must prevail in case of opposition or conflict. This principle is obviously antiliberal, very modern and nevertheless also very old. It was, after all, the order in New Spain during its three hundred years as a colony. But this article gave a formal legal base to agrarian reform and, in general, to the relations of the State with the exploiters of the Nation's natural resources, particularly minerals and oil. The fact that the majority of these exploiters were foreign reveals the nationalistic and antiforeign tone of the Mexican Revolution. But this is confirmed and broadened by other provisions of the same article such as that which states that only Mexicans and Mexican corporations may acquire possession of lands, water or mining and oil resources, and that if foreigners want to obtain them, they must agree to consider themselves as Mexicans and not invoke the protection of their governments under penalty of losing their acquired wealth to the Nation. This same Article 27—but also Article 3 and even more Article 130—is anticlerical and very much in keeping with an old Mexican tradition; and it is so to a degree of insistence and detail which is truly surprising.

Article 123 is, in reality, a complete law. Rather than being new in itself, it raised labor legislation to the rank of a constitutional law, while even today it is an ordinary law in most countries. By 1917, of course, several countries of Western

Europe already had provisions or special laws on labor; but the great principles that inspired them did not appear in their constitutions. Actually, as has already been said, Article 123 is a complete regulating law, since it contains such minute provisions as those specifying the number and length of special rest periods that the female worker is entitled to when she is nursing her children. The constitutional character of this Mexican labor legislation unquestionably makes Article 123 an innovation; but at the same time it raises doubts as to whether the Mexican constituents so distrusted the protection which an ordinary law might afford their revolutionary convictions that they preferred to shield them with the constitution, which is more difficult to amend and politically impossible to abolish.

It does not seem to me that the Mexican Revolution found its best expression in the spoken or written word, but in the psychology and morale of the whole country. By 1920 the Mexican Revolution had no longer a single enemy within the country, and although the United States did not recognize the government of Obregón, the government and the country at large were self-confident. For the first time in ten long years it was felt that there was order and the presence of an accepted authority. The world was going through a period of prosperity which reached Mexico. But above all else, naturally, there was enormous expectation of the great reconstruction work to be initiated by the Revolution. Not "everybody" but certainly large numbers everywhere felt that exalted sensation of man turned into a god, of man with creative genius and will, with the faith that from his hands may come a new, great, brilliant, harmonious and kind world; faith, also, that nothing is impossible and that anything may be achieved by simply willing it.

The explanation of how the Mexican Revolution passed from that initial stage—exalted, secure, generous—to the one in

which we now find ourselves is complicated and difficult. Although I believe that this explanation is necessary in order to know where the Revolution stands now and even in order to imagine where it may go, I shall barely attempt to sketch it.

It is a generally accepted observation that a revolution always produces a corresponding reaction; but in our case there is a particular circumstance to be considered. The drive and the energy of the Revolution were consumed much more in destroying the past than in constructing the future. As a result, the past certainly disappeared, but the new present came into being and began to develop haphazardly, so that, for lack of another image to imitate, it finally ended by becoming equal to the destroyed past. From this standpoint the reaction won a complete victory over the Revolution, since it has succeeded in taking the country back to the exact point where it was when the Revolution broke out. I mean "the exact point" where Mexico was before the Revolution in the sense of the general mental outlook prevailing now in the country, but not in the sense that the country itself is like the Mexico of 1910, and much less in the sense of what Mexico will be like in ten or twenty years.

Why has this happened, or why has it happened to this extent? Many factors would have to be taken into account in order to give a complete picture, but one seems to be outstanding: the lack of ideologists to formulate the Mexican Revolution, to indicate its course and, once it was under way, the unavoidable but deplorable fact that the people who were youngest, most prepared, intelligent and honest joined the government in only minor posts. Therefore, they neither truly inspired the policy or the plans of the Revolution, nor served it by criticizing them, as they would have done had they been outside the government, in congress or the press, for example. The press, for its part, from the beginning took a stand opposed to the government until the government ceased to be

revolutionary and became conservative. Since then, they live as harmoniously as partners in a business enterprise.

The fact is that, in one way or another, the present situation has been reached. What is this situation?

The economy is sound, judged from a classical liberal point of view, so much so that it is often commented that Mexico has made phenomenal progress in recent years. More strictly examined, it is possible to find rather weak points in this economy, such as the fact that some official and semiofficial enterprises depend ultimately on the fiscal resources of the federal government. Mexico likewise faces the serious problem of an unpromising future for its visible exports. A declining market for its metals and principal agricultural exports, together with ever-increasing imports, places it in a difficult situation. However, it may be stated that the present economic conditions of Mexico do not create insoluble problems and that they are no more serious than those of, for example, the Latin American countries and, in general, any country in the world with similar resources and history.

Nor is the apparent social situation bad. The constant improvement of communications since 1925 has given the Mexican population a mobility which it formerly lacked, making it easier to move to places where there are prospects of better work and salaries. The general level of public health has risen, as is shown by the fall in the general mortality rate and the increase in life expectancy. A worthy effort has been made in the field of education, although not proportionate to the headlong increase in our population and the greater needs of today's children and young people. The social security services although not as broad and general as would be desired, have been extended to a notable and promising extent.

Strictly speaking, the only problem of great magnitude is

the rate at which the population and the national product grow. Since demographic trends change only very slowly, it seems better to look at it from that angle, and not, as it is quite possible to do, from the point of view of readjustment of investments and production. The rate of population growth is all the more serious because, alongside a high and sustained birth rate, the infant mortality rate tends to decline slowly but surely. It is possible that this population increase may very well strain the country's physical, human and economic resources, and that if energetic measures are not taken, it may present a very serious problem. Until now, the rate of economic growth has surpassed, generally speaking, that of population. But there is more than one reason to suspect that this situation cannot be indefinitely maintained, and that even the more or less normal ups and downs of the economic development of any country may produce disproportionate disequilibria, precisely because of the lack of a margin which permits time to act during years of pause or recession.

The political situation is decidedly less satisfactory than the economic and social. The only tangible progress is the periodic and regular renewal of the Mexican rulers: the president of the Republic, the governors of the States and the municipal authorities and federal and local legislative bodies. But their election is far from popular, being decided by personalist forces that rarely or never represent the genuine interests of large human groups. The economic and political power of the president of the Republic is almost all-embracing and is exercised in the designation of public servants of almost all categories and areas of the country. And since it is impossible for one man to know the special needs of each city or town, and which person or persons are most suitable to resolve them, most of the choices of the great elector are deplorably inadequate, and in any event they do not please anyone, because

they are not the result of the free play of the political interests and aspirations of the groups concerned.

Even so, it may perhaps be said that Mexico's situation today, judged in its entirety, is not inferior to the best to be found in any Latin American country. Chile, Uruguay and Costa Rica, for example, have a political life which corresponds much more closely to a real and stable democracy. But the limitations of the physical and human resources of Chile and Uruguay and the small territory of Costa Rica make their political future, in reality, less bright than might appear at first glance. Argentina will take many years to recover from the physical and moral damage inflicted on it by the Perón dictatorship. And Brazil, with physical and human elements that are far superior to Mexico's, has not progressed, for one reason or another, as was expected of her.

On Mexico's horizon, nonetheless, there is a black cloud that few Mexicans and foreigners have noticed until now. Mexico's present situation—generally good, as has been said—is the product of the Mexican Revolution, and this year, while we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its initiation, we have heard a great deal about it. So what, essentially, did the Mexican Revolution offer, what has it accomplished, what is there left for it to accomplish, and can it do so?

It seems to me that the essential characteristics of the Mexican Revolution were these: to entrust to the State, and not to the individual nor to private enterprise, the promotion of the general welfare of the country; to make this general welfare the principal or only goal of the action of the State so that its economic and technical resources as well as its moral influence would be used to better the lot of the farmers and laborers, the teachers and the bureaucracy, and so forth. The Mexican Revolution had, moreover, a strong popular flavor, not only in the sense already described, in attempting to satisfy first the needs of the poor, but in believing that the people, the Indians,

themselves, have virtues which must be recognized, respected and enhanced. The dominant idea during the good years of the Revolution, let us say 1920-1925, was that the Mexican Indian had so many natural qualities that the problem of education lay in teaching him modern work techniques, but without contaminating him or modifying his general way of life: his traditional courtesy and reserve, his artistic sensitivity and capacity, etc. And it was also a revolution that exalted the national at the expense, naturally, of the foreign.

What is left of all this? In truth, little or nothing.

In the first place, let us look at the situation of the government in Mexican society. Its political power is almost unlimited: that of the president in all the Republic; that of the governors in their respective States as regards local matters; and that of the municipal authorities in their respective jurisdictions as regards the minor matters that they manage. What is the basis of this situation? In part, the laws themselves, since the federal Constitution gives the Executive very broad powers, and the local constitutions also give very broad powers to the governors of the States; and, in part, the fact that when legal power does not suffice, it is quite easy to find an impeccable juridical solution, even though its purpose may be clearly wrong; and when this turns out to be too complicated, the law is simply ignored. In a real democracy, there are two effective correctives to these two kinds of abuse: the administration of justice is precisely charged with enforcing the law where it should apply; and public opinion denounces the abuse and compels the authority to correct it. In Mexico these two checks function sporadically and ineffectively.

On the other hand, in the sphere of economic action, the authority and force of the State have become less and less vigorous and decisive, to the extent that it is now possible to say that the State is the prisoner of private enterprise. If it wanted to fight, the government would win, even using only

legal means, such as, for example, fiscal measures. But the government does not want to fight nor even to disagree with private enterprise. It is already remarkable—and this in itself describes the situation—that a considerable increase in the number and size of public needs—which would have to be reflected in an increase in budget expenditure—has not been matched by a change in tax rates or by the creation of new taxes.

The situation has developed broadly in this way. The state rightly considered at a certain moment that Mexico could not progress very much if it relied on agriculture and mining, its two traditional occupations; therefore, the country should industrialize, at least until it would be one-third agricultural, one-third mining and one-third industrial. To achieve this goal, the State took the initiative in the establishment or expansion of certain industries. But in most cases, it waited for private enterprise to carry out the undertakings. For this purpose, and in accordance with classical liberal reasoning, the State proposed to create "a favorable climate" for private enterprise, and this was to be done, naturally, by the classical means: political and social stability; inflexible wage rates; low taxes; easy credit and other secondary aids.

The State was not mistaken either in its initial reasoning or in the methods it used to achieve industrialization, for it is estimated that in effect 60% of industrial investment to date comes from private sources. But the State made several important errors which have finally led to the situation in which we now find ourselves. One was that it never drew up a general framework of the industrial activities which were most suitable for the country, so that private enterprise would only undertake those that fitted into that general framework. In the second place, the State has been unsuccessful in restricting inflation so that the real wages of the labor force have clearly diminished, and it is the workers who ultimately are paying

for the industrial progress of Mexico. In the third place, as an inevitable consequence, economic influence has begun to be converted into political influence, so that the State today would have difficulty in taking a fundamental economic policy measure without consulting the country's great banking and industrial firms or, in fact, without counting on their approval beforehand. For these reasons and some others quite as important, the final outcome is that while 16% of the Mexican families get 50% of the national income, 46% of those families got only one-seventh of such income.

I must add one word, not about the political or economic strength of the government, but about its moral authority. It has been at a low point for several years, and for many reasons. One of them is the most important, however. All men participating in the country's public life, all politicians, as they are commonly named, talk as if we were living in 1920, 1928 or 1938 at the latest. They talk as if the Mexican Revolution were very much alive, as if its original goals were still prevailing, as if large and small government policies were inspired and adopted to reach those goals in the shortest possible time and to the fullest possible measure. It seems, however, that moral authority usually rests on the man whose deeds match his word and whose words do not go beyond his deeds.

This situation explains why there has been a considerable weakening of the popular meaning and nationalist note found in the Mexican Revolution during its best period.

It is difficult to give an opinion, even a very tentative one, on whether Mexico can go back to a course more in keeping with the original objective of the Revolution, and what means it should employ to achieve this, short of a new revolution. This is perhaps the principal concern of Mexico's leading men, although I do not know whether there is an agreement, at least as to the principal points towards which the country should

direct itself. It may be that the real dilemma for Mexico—as for so many countries in the world—lies in whether to grow faster at the top only, or at a slower pace, but benefiting the lower levels of the social pyramid. Whatever may be the proper way, I am quite confident that Mexico will find it soon, for my country has a real genius for geting out of a mess . . . and for getting into a mess.

3 / Latin America and the United States, Now and Tomorrow

THE UNUSUAL world situation, and the conditions now prevailing in Latin America—quite unusual too—make it advisable to go once more over the old question of what the relations of Latin American countries among themselves and the relations of all of them with the United States are and should be. To attempt it, let us look first at Latin America. What is the present situation of Latin America, except Cuba, which must be considered separately?

Unfortunately, from an economic standpoint it is not satisfactory. With all of the Latin American countries determined to develop their economies as rapidly as possible, their imports of capital goods especially have increased greatly in quantity, but perhaps still more in value, since these imports must be purchased at higher prices than those of ten or fifteen years ago. Their exports, on the other hand, have had since that time an uncertain and not very profitable market. This keeps their balances of payments in deficit, or very close to it. The

final result is that the economic development they need and long for almost frantically is arrested; or it fails to achieve the pace necessary to clearly convince them that they are steadily advancing towards their goal of a material well-being definitely greater and more general than before. So they become restless and pessimistic, and are inclined to try other methods, copy other models, or perhaps embrace a new political philosophy in order to attain their objectives.

The political picture is better today than a few years ago. Since the disappearance of the shameful dictatorships of Perón in Argentina, Rojas Pinilla in Colombia and Pérez Jiménez in Venezuela, and the uprooting of Somoza's dictatorship in Nicaragua, there only remains, to a disgraceful extent, that of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. But the governments of Stroessner in Paraguay and the Somoza brothers in Nicaragua are certainly to be condemned, in addition to which it will not be possible much longer to postpone the fundamental economic and social changes needed at least in Guatemala, El Salvador and Peru.

On the other hand, it is disheartening to witness the situation of two of the three countries which, after suffering the humiliations of a dictatorship, succeeded in re-establishing a popularly elected government. The excessive power of the Venezuelan and Argentine armies forces the civilian governments of Betancourt and Frondizi to follow a path uncertain and sometimes tortuous and which, in any case, does not express the majority wishes as represented by the parliaments of those two countries. Presumably, without that harmful influence, Betancourt's government would attempt bolder and more basic reforms. And in the case of Argentina, the interference of those forces undoubtedly has the effect, among others, of undermining the prestige of civilian authority and prompting the country to believe that it should return to a military government.

Nonetheless, what is most discouraging is that there is not a single Latin American government which can be said to enjoy either evident or, especially, active popular sympathy. The most traditionally democratic countries—Chile, Uruguay and Costa Rica—certainly do not have brilliant governments which can capture and inspire the support of their own citizens, much less serve as a hope and even still less as a model for the other Latin American peoples. Brazil, with its superior physical and human resources, is a country of surprises, but not always pleasant ones: alongside President Kubitschek's clever trick of launching Field Marshall Lott as *his* presidential candidate in order to relieve the country of the threat of a military colossus, alongside a drive—bold, if extreme—to create a great capital overnight, Brazil lives in a state of chronic administrative disorder and complacently spends more than it has, so that it also lives in a state of chronic inflation which swells the wealth of a bold minority while impoverishing its people.

Colombia, which has never lacked in its government at least a nucleus of men of exceptionally high intellectual and moral caliber, still has not awakened from the nightmare of Rojas Pinilla, nor has it succeeded in eliminating the irrational hatreds which divide liberals and conservatives. In spite of all this, Colombia progresses, but not without anxieties and doubts as to whether a new generation has been created which can succeed today's great liberal and conservative figures and which will be better able to measure the urgency and discern the shape of the new problems of the nation and of Latin America.

Mexico, which for many years led the other countries not only of Latin America but of the world in its reformation of economic, social and political structure, shaking off the lethargy of an economic progress that was undeniable but not general; Mexico, the intrepid leader of so many good causes, has failed in this hour crucial for Latin America. For some

time the United States has persisted in presenting Mexico as a model to its brother Americas. This—says the United States —is a country that, after a revolution to get rid of the burden of its useless and cumbersome past, has put its house in order. It lives in peace and has achieved political stability; a civilian government has succeeded a military; it has made spectacular economic progress, and the lower classes are entering the middle class in ever-increasing numbers and with considerable ease. All this is true and nonetheless we Mexicans believe that Mexico could have done more, very much more, than it has; and that by not so doing, it has lost the initiative in Latin America in basic and just social reform.

Latin America's situation, in spite of the deficiencies commented on—and others that have not been pointed out—was, if not good, at least tolerable, and better than it had been in recent times; but it must be recognized that the Cuban revolution has put it in a state of almost complete confusion.

No one, of course, would dare to make a prediction now on how this revolution is going to finish. Even so, and assuming that right now it were to end in a complete failure, that its governing group were to be replaced by another entirely different in men, aims and methods, it will leave a legacy and exercise an influence that no power on earth will be able to obliterate. Some of its lessons, firm and clear, have already taken their place in history.

The first lesson—and an important one—is that everything and anything can happen in Latin America; or, put it in another way, that in Latin America nothing is stable and solid, nothing is based on an immovable rock, but everything appears to rest lightly on a gunpowder keg that can explode at any moment. The second lesson—or the reverse of the first—is the incredible force of inflammatory speech, the more reckless the speech, the greater its force. All of which leads to the sad conclusion that when man joins his fellows in a crowd he loses

most of his individual reasoning power and judgment, and he is dominated by blind, raging emotion.

However, two other concrete and impressive lessons are more outstanding. One of these is the fantastic vulnerability of the United States: Cuba, its former submissive slave, and furthermore small, poor and disunited, has literally immobilized it, speechless, in a corner. The other is that, apart from its deep political significance, the Cuban revolution has presented itself as a popular movement yielding to nothing in its determination to better the lot of the masses. That is to say, two characteristics that, more than any others, impress Latin America are determination and firmness, and a determination and firmness that serve a good cause.

For the last ten or fifteen years it has been fashionable in American academic circles to speak of the "realistic" concept of international politics. According to this, man in his national and the state in its international political life are motivated only by the desire to better their positions of power at any price. And even though the theoreticians who defend that concept are very careful to emphasize that physical force is not the only element that creates and increases power, they always put it in first place. In Cuba there is a living example for all the world to see that physical force can be successfully opposed by other forces, sometimes as weak as the spoken word which, according to a popular saying, is carried away by the wind.

If Latin Americans are intelligent and perceptive, they should be deeply impressed by this vulnerability of the United States; first, because they have discovered it—rediscovered it, a good historian would say—at Cuba's expense; second, because, since everything in this world is relative, the United States' weakness strengthens Latin Americans and without paying anything for the strength so acquired; finally, and above all, because the weakness of the United States is in this case noble, entirely praiseworthy, for strength that does not resort to force

in order to resolves its difficulties inspires sympathy and confidence.

The other, perhaps more interesting, lesson is that the admiration aroused by the Cuban revolution in Latin America is due—more than to anything else—to the fact that it has aimed at benefiting the people boldly and directly. It is probable that not all the methods used in Cuba could be employed in other Latin American countries, and still more probable that their employment would be undesirable. But what cannot be denied is the following: It is no longer possible to restrain the desire of the poor in Latin America and the whole world to better themselves. The poor man is fed up with hearing that he is going to get better and with seeing that he does not get any better; he is fed up with getting better today, but not tomorrow; and he is also fed up with getting better today and tomorrow, but just a little bit. He wants to get much better, soon, and all the time. It is possible and I believe desirable that man will change his mind in the future; but for the moment and for a long time to come, he believes and he will believe that man lives by bread alone and, in order to obtain that bread, today's man is capable of selling his soul to the devil, or of selling his freedom to communism.

And this is the element of the Cuban revolution that is most disturbing to Latin America. Granted that the Mexican revolution was the last one that could be pure and innocently nationalistic and that all that have followed it have had to accept the taint of some international "ism"; and granted that it was logical, natural and inevitable that the Cuban revolutionaries should believe and still believe that the United States will crush their revolution; granted that on Fidel Castro, but especially on Che Guevara, the fall of the Arbenz pro-communist regime in Guatemala—which Guevara witnessed with his own eyes—made an indelible impression; granted, finally, that no revolutionary movement has failed to feed on

mistrust and hatred, and that for Cuba the United States was the closest and easiest target. And in a further attempt at understanding, still another concession can be made: that the policy of resisting and fighting a great power is a rough game in which almost any weapon can be considered fair, and so the Cuban revolutionaries could flirt a little with the Soviet block.

None of this can prevent an impartial observer from concluding that—aside from strategy, tactics, intentions and words —the Cuban revolutionaries have imported communism to their country and to Latin America and that they have set up a communist government. And that same observer has to conclude that this is an absolutely new event, of incalculable importance and destined to profoundly disturb the life of Latin American countries as related to each other and to the United States.

The relations between Latin American countries have never been as intelligent and profitable as they could and should have been; but they have always been based on a tacit understanding which has seldom been disturbed, and then only temporarily. The predominant characteristic of those relations has been similarity, not difference, and much less an insurmountable difference. For the first time in a hundred and fifty years of independence, Cuban communism presents a difference that can become insoluble. If the ideological loyalty of the Cuban rulers reaches the point of prevailing over Latin America's common historical background, Cuba will not only tend to separate from Latin America, but will end up regarding Latin America with inevitable hostility as one more obstacle in its path. And to the extent that other Latin American peoples and governments feel that their friendship with Cuba depends on an unconditional acceptance of everything it does within and without its borders, to that extent those peoples and governments will, at best, consider Cuba a black sheep

that should be left to its own fate and, at worst, an insufferable burden that must be gotten rid of.

But the Cuban revolutionaries have presented Latin America with another equally serious problem: that of choosing between Cuba and the United States, since they maintain that their differences with the latter are irreconcilable. No Latin American country loves the United States—perhaps no nation has ever loved another. In spite of this, it is hard to believe that there are not in Latin America people sensible enough to recognize in the clear light of truth that, besides the impossibility of not maintaining relations with the United States, it is necessary that those relations be good, firm and close. That these relations should be conditioned by respect for the rights of others, that they should benefit the poor and the weak more than the rich and the strong is one thing; and quite another is that it is impossible and undesirable to do without them or to base them on recriminations and constant quarrels. Communist Cuba places Latin America in a real dilemma.

I am convinced that the Cuban leaders are perfectly aware of the problems that they have created for the Latin American countries in their relations with each other and with the United States. It happens that, as true revolutionaries, as people who seek to subvert everything, turn the world upside down, they believe that the Latin American people are on their side and that only the governments are against them. So they despise the latter in silence or they insult them openly, and they encourage the people to overthrow them. They so sturdily believe in this idea that they have gone to the fantastic extreme of assiduously cultivating the Negro population of the United States in the certainty that it will embrace their cause without delay. In this way, in addition to gaining sympathy for their cause, they hope to deal a blow at the United States by planting in the middle of its territory a Trojan

Horse from which will burst forth eight million armed rebels at the right moment.

At this stage, no thinking person can disdain the destructive force of not only an entire revolutionary doctrine, but of a simple isolated tactic when it is carried out with sufficient determination. In the particular case of Cuba, moreover, it is necessary to recognize and admire the fact that the revolutionaries have not only played their cards so far in a magnificently effective fashion, but they have played them grandly, in a really universal setting. This is so true that a poor Mexican conspirator can hardly keep from wondering if the Cuban revolutionaries are the ones who actually plan the play, or if they only move the cards about. In any event, it is a terrible shame that man, so willing to make laboratory tests when after the secrets of chemistry or biology, does not want to make tests in human affairs which may involve the fate of millions of men.

But the truth is that I would give anything to have Fidel Castro, Guevara and Raúl Roa decide to try out their ideas in Mexico. The experiment or test would be made under ideal conditions, for if any country is sympathetic to Cuba, it is Mexico; and in no other is the ground so well prepared for animosity towards the United States. As to the Mexican government, it is as vulnerable to demagoguery as those of Ydígoras and Trujillo. In the experiment the Cuban revolutionaries, during just a month, would make a public campaign of insults to the Mexican government, addressing the same epithets to López Mateos that Castro, Roa and Guevara so often have spat into the face of Eisenhower and now at Nixon and Kennedy, and would use on Secretary of State Tello the adjectives that Roa used on the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Chile, Argentina and Brazil. The program of insults to the government would alternate with another of glowing praises of the Mexican "people" and exhortations that they overthrow

their government. I would be willing to give odds that the sympathy in Mexico for the Cuban revolution would evaporate as if by magic, and I would also bet that even as open a friend of the revolution as former President Cárdenas would not again defend it, at least not in public.

What, then, makes up the Latin American sympathy for Cuba? I do not refer, naturally, to the communists, for they are by definition mere partisans; neither do I speak of the radicals who project their domestic dissatisfactions into a sympathy for other nations, in a clear-cut case of the grass being greener on the other side of the fence. I mean the spontaneous sympathy of the ordinary man and woman, without prejudices or ideological ties. In the knowledge that, besides being risky, it is unpleasantly pedantic to engage in collective psychology, I believe that there are one or two principal elements and another secondary one, but no more. The principal element of popular sympathy is that the Cuban revolution has sought to benefit the poor, the defenseless, those who are in the majority in any society—including the Soviet. The second principal element is the conviction—still held—that the only aim of the Cuban revolutionaries is the welfare of the people, and that they pursue this so sincerely and honestly that they place it before all else. And the incidental element is the natural sympathy for any David who fights a Goliath.

As deep and enthusiastic as the sympathy bubbling forth from these elements must be, it may turn out to be perishable. The welfare of the people must not only be pursued, it must actually be achieved; for if not, it will take its place among the many good intentions with which the way to hell has so long been paved. Up to now, the struggle, with its liquidation of economic imperialism and an amoral middle class, has appeared glorious; but now a legitimate doubt exists: Can the revolution proceed from its destructive task to the task of creation and construction, using only the instrument of the

spoken word and the televised image? And other doubts already felt by some are bound to spread. One of these can destroy the second element of sympathy: What are the Cuban leaders more interested in, the welfare of their people or stirring up trouble for the United States? No one, I presume, can claim to have read the complete works of Doctor Castro; but perhaps it would not be too far from the truth that eighty percent of the words that they contain are dedicated to defaming the United States, and a modest twenty percent to discussing the problems of the Cuban people. (I refer only to the words, because I do not know whether any action has been taken and for what purpose.) And there are even doubts concerning the secondary element of sympathy: from the beginning David called the Chinese and Russian Goliaths to his aid in his struggle against the United States Goliath, so that David's gallantry is considerably diminished.

The position of Latin America as regards its relations with the United States is still more delicate—if this is possible—than as regards its relations to Cuba. All the governments of Latin America must realize that as Cuba becomes more insistent and increasingly bitter in its accusations against the United States, the situation becomes more precarious and the crisis more imminent. But it is absolutely impossible for them to sustain any other thesis than the negative one of nonintervention, and now as never before with increased vigor. In the first place, because Latin America has had its fill of United States intervention; secondly, because Latin America has gone to a lot of trouble to convince the United States that intervention, in the long run, hurts its author more than its object, and all this painful accomplishment would be abandoned forever as useless; thirdly, because the lethal power of modern armaments—even those ironically termed "conventional"—make even a symbolic defense ridiculous. So the weak peoples are left no other choice

than to fall abjectly to their knees in order not to disappear from earth.

But there is still a more decisive reason, although it would appear to have been overlooked until now, that would put to test the intelligence of the United States—namely, the latter's ability to solve the problem of Cuba without the use of force. After announcing several times—and to the four winds, to be sure—that Russia would use its intercontinental missiles to defend Cuba from an American invasion, Khrushchev explained to a Cuban journalist that it should be understood that he never thought of anything but a symbolic defense of the country, that is, that to defend it he would set off lovely roman candles in Moscow's Red Square.

What does this apparent withdrawal mean? Not—heaven knows!—weakness; but a maneuver that I shall refrain from describing in all its ramifications, in spite of its almost irresistible fascination. It is a trap, so that the United States, in the certainty that Russia will make no military movement in Cuba's defense, will carry out an armed intervention in Cuba. Many of the Russians' plays at first seem to be stupid or wild; but they are unfailingly damaging in their ultimate effects. And in this case, Russia hopes that the United States will do itself irreparable harm, not only, of course, in Latin America, but in Africa and Asia, today's Agramante Field.

Presumably the Latin American governments are fully aware of the situation—already difficult in itself—of the United States as regards Cuba; and of the enormous complications that the Cuban problem represents for the United States, which, with interests all over the world, cannot have any "local" problem, and not even a simply "continental" problem. The problem of Cuba, moreover, has broken out at the worst moment in United States history when, rightly or wrongly, many have become convinced that, while Russia may have surpassed the United States in physical strength, it has certain-

ly done so in political ability. The United States cannot, then, postpone for very long its decision; and as the fatal moment nears, there is increasing apprehension that the decision will be unwise.

What can this unhappy Latin America do now, placed, as it were, with its back to the wall? There is only one possibility: to mediate, conciliate, or rather try to do so, since up to now the Cubans have not shown the least inclination to even allow themselves to be approached. They have not only failed to imply any such inclination, but their conduct must be interpreted as a complete negative. It is certain that the United States would be willing to participate in a discussion, although it is foreseeable that its demands would be substantial. So for the moment apparently Latin America has no recourse but to pray that God will help it through this crisis and to hope devoutly that those who are involved in this problem may realize before it is too late that there is an eternal principle: namely, that everything, absolutely everything in this world—and the next—has a limit and an end.

As for the United States, what can it do? In order to explore such a problem, it is necessary to begin with a clear understanding of the position of the United States not only as regards Cuba, but as regards the whole world.

The United States is the head of the so-called Occidental World which is opposed by the Communist Block, its apparently implacable enemy. Between these two camps is found a group of countries, disunited and dispersed, which, even though taking no part in the contest, even with no desire to do so, even believing their participation to be unnecessary, may be dragged into it. Any struggle between personal or national interests, still more a struggle of the magnitude and depth of this one, can be resolved by physical force which either eliminates one of the contenders or converts rival into slave by

placing one of them in a position of military and political inferiority. Or it can be resolved through a series of provisional compromises and arrangements which, by getting through one difficulty today and another tomorrow, may postpone war indefinitely. Even under this second supposition—decidedly the better of the two—the danger of war will always exist, and it is no exaggeration to say that with modern arms it exists every minute of our lives.

Now, to be in real and constant danger of war, not as one of many soldiers, but as the leader, officer, technician, financier; to be in danger of a war in which no arm or artifice may be considered ignoble or unnecessary; to be in danger of a war with no clear possibility of winning it and with the knowledge that even in victory the damages suffered would be, of necessity, irreparable; all this, it must be wholly admitted, has to create a psychology that is not very favorable to tolerance and understanding. And it must be even more difficult for the United States to suffer the defiance and offenses of Cuba, a small country, traditionally servile and geographically located next door, instead of in some remote place like Bolivia, for example.

The United States has to do something about this business of Cuba; but, once again, what can it do? From a juridical point of view, the solution of an international court of justice is out of the question, because Cuba would have to be willing to submit to the court's decision; Cuba can, then, be accused before the Organization of American States and the United Nations. The United States would gain nothing and might lose by this, because, apart from the fact that Cuba knows how to defend itself and is not alone, the dispute would only embitter recriminations and make understanding more unlikely. Still on a legal level, the United States could look for a situation which would lead to a declaration of war on Cuba with the knowledge and consent of the United States Congress. Such

a solution is completely unrealistic, for although there are abundant means of finding a justification for any formal declaration of war, the nations that do so also try to find a moral justification and, in the case of Cuba, this would be literally impossible; first, because no matter how wrong many of the actions of the Cuban government may be, none of these actions, nor all of them together, can be presented as a valid *casus belli,* even by twisting the facts to the utmost. And we are not speaking of the inequality of the adversaries, which alone would make it difficult to justify the United States.

With no legal solution in sight, what could the United States do? If a formal declaration of war has been rejected as legally and morally inacceptable, it is even more necessary to reject a military invasion, no matter under what disguise. It is possible to follow the solution mentioned in an unfortunate moment by Senator Kennedy during his presidential campaign: that of aiding and abetting with money and military equipment Castro's Cuban opponents, encouraging them to invade Cuba and reconquer it for the friendship of the United States.

This was exactly the procedure used to overthrow Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala. Aside from the fact that Cuba's island situation would make such a maneuver as clear as daylight, the truth is that in the case of Guatemala the United States machinations were about as successfully disguised as the sun is hidden by holding up one finger. And this was demonstrated by the fact that Guatemala's best men all refused to collaborate with Castillo Armas, whom they considered a traitor to his country; shortly after assuming power, he was assassinated in mysterious circumstances that seemed, however, to have national sanction. But that is not the lesson furnished by the Guatemalan episode. If the United States intervention made any sense, it was that made by all violence: rip out weeds by the roots so that they will not sprout up again anywhere else.

Now communism has sprouted up in Cuba and to such a degree that it makes the case of Guatemala seem to have been child's play. Just remember that the final straw was Arbenz's announcement that Guatemala was ready to receive a few pistols and rifles from Czechoslovakia. Cuba, on the other hand, is arrogantly receiving arms from both Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union itself.

To me, there seems no other solution than that the United States and Latin America must grasp at the first possible moment for reconciliation, which may eventually have the unexpected reward of laying the foundations of a new concept in American solidarity.