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Camilo Torres

REVOLUTIONARY PRIEST

His Complete Writings and Messages

Edited by John Gerassi



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Revolutionary Priest

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Camilo Torres was born in Bogotá in 1929 into an aristocratic family. His father was a well established pediatrician, while his mother often demonstrated against female inequality. When he was three the family moved to Geneva and later to Barcelona, but by the time he was eight they were back in Bogotá. Camilo was a sickly baby and had a private tutor until he attended a German school in Bogotá. He graduated with honours and enrolled to read law at the national university; he was at this period leading a wild life but after an unhappy love affair decided to be a priest. He entered the diocesan seminary, in spite of the protests of his mother, and proved so interested in the social role of the priest that his ordination was brought forward so he could study sociology at Louvain in Belgium. Here he obtained his master's degree, founded (with G. Perez) a Colombian-Belgian group whose main interest was social action, and journeyed throughout Europe helping the deprived and homeless. He returned in 1958 to Colombia to work for his doctorate and was appointed lecturer and chaplain at the university. He threw himself, however, into the struggle for liberation and by June 1965 was proclaiming violence as a means to achieve economic equality. His laicization was ordered at the end of June and Camilo joined the Army of National Liberation. In February 1966 his detachment ambushed a military patrol and Camilo was killed.

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Revolutionary Priest

The Complete Writings
and Messages of
CAMILO TORRES

*Edited and with an
Introduction by John Gerassi*

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The Cincinnati Bible Seminary



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To many priests all over the world, Camilo Torres will always remain one of the most glorious examples of genuine Christian charity and solidarity. To thousands of revolutionaries, he has proved that the dialogue between Marxists and Christians can lead to real brotherhood. To me, he has widened horizons and deepened understanding of man and, I hope, strengthened commitment. In editing his work and investigating the effect of his mission on earth, I have been led into homes and temples I would never have visited otherwise. In these places, I have had the honour and pleasure of meeting priests totally dedicated to the cause of man, and for that alone I can never thank Camilo enough. Among these men I should like to single out François Houtart, Laurence Bright, Teodoro del Corro, Miguel de Francisco, Raimondo Ozanam, Leo Alting von Geusau, Gustavo Gutiérrez Merino, Italo Bertoletti – all of whom helped me to better my understanding of Camilo, whom I so uncharitably misjudged as an academic liberal when I spent a few hours talking with him in Bogotá in 1962. I hope that this volume in at least a small way does honour to them and those other magnificent priests I have been fortunate to come to know: Felix McGowan, Blase Bonpane, Art Melville, Juan García Elorrio, and, for much too brief a time, Padre Sardiñas, the Cuban *guerrillero*.

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JOHN GERASSI

LIST OF TRANSLATORS

June de Cipriano Alcantara; Angelo Boyer; Robert Olsen; Linda Day; John D. Ring; Juan Tito; and the anonymous staffers of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (OSPAAAL)

I took off my cassock to be more truly a priest

The duty of every Catholic is to be a revolutionary,
The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution

The Catholic who is not a revolutionary is living in mortal sin
CAMILO TORRES RESTREPO

Introduction

Camilo Torres and the Revolutionary Church

by John Gerassi

In São Paulo Dominican monks work with urban guerrillas. In Montevideo a priest heads an underground revolutionary network. In Bolivia fifty Catholic clergymen openly espouse armed rebellion. In Lima a priest co-directs the National Liberation Front. In Buenos Aires another identifies the love of Christ with the violent struggle of the poor. In the mountains of Colombia a priest fights, gun in hand, with the guerrilla Army of National Liberation. Seemingly everywhere in Latin America, Catholic churchmen are committed to violent social revolution.

Well, not quite. In fact, the revolutionary priests are a small, though growing, minority. And it is not only in Latin America that priests exhibit such amazing social consciousness. In Spain Basque priests have long waged a courageous struggle against the Franco dictatorship. In France, where the worker-priest movement was born, Catholic clergymen are active in trade-union agitation. In Holland they lead the struggle for the liberation of church dogma and of the mores of churchmen. In the United States Fathers Phil and Dan Berrigan have been at the forefront of the non-violent, civil-disobedient, anti-war movement, and various Maryknoll priests and nuns have actually helped Latin-American guerrilla movements.

But in a real way, these Maryknollers – including Felix McGowan, who worked with Bolivian rebels, Blase Bonpane, Art and Thomas Melville, and Marian Peter Brad-

ford, who helped the Guatemalan guerrillas – were and are party to the Latin-American situation. And it is that situation which is most taut, primarily because there the church's left wingers are not simply helping the poor and the exploited but are openly and clearly supporting their use of armed violence. In doing so, these clerics have split the church into two seemingly irreconcilable camps, and the hierarchy, expectedly, is doing everything possible to curb the dissidents.

Of course, such splits are nothing new to the Catholic church. During the French Revolution, for example, Father Jacques Roux joined the Jacobins in their extremism, while the hierarchy stimulated the counter-revolution in Vendée (and Pope Pius VI condemned the French Revolution's principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity). In Latin America, during the colonial period, such clergymen as Camilo Henríquez, Antonio Orihuela, and, of course, Morelos and Hidalgo fought with the revolutionaries while their ecclesiastical superiors supported Spain.

Generally, for all the talk that the church should not occupy itself with temporal matters, it has always done so – but almost always in support of the Right. Over the last century, it has even managed to make its political bias part of 'infallible' church dogma. Pope Leo XIII, for example, identified liberalism's struggle for individual rights as the work of Lucifer, warning socially-conscious priests that 'in no way whatsoever is it permitted to ask for, advocate, or grant the unrestricted freedom of thought, press, education, or religion, for if such rights were natural it would then be permissible to reject submission to God'.¹ He went on to insist that the church must not only admit and respect human inequality but proclaim it, lest the sacredness of

1. Encyclical *Libertas*, 1888, Nos. 16 and 50. Leo XIII was aiming his guns specifically at the young priest Lamennais who had called for elimination of all the pope's temporal powers.

private property, which is 'inviolable by natural law', be challenged.² Later, Pius XI, taking into account the Catholic laymen's increasing preoccupation with the class struggle, found a way to put the hierarchy's conservatism into a 'social-Christian' doctrine – and advocated 'the collaboration of classes'.³ Although Pius XI was sometimes hailed for his liberalism, his doctrine, in fact, was nothing less than corporativism, the basis for the fascist states of Mussolini and Salazar.

Mussolini's defeat temporarily smudged Pius's system. But it did not take long for astute Catholic reactionaries to convert it into the moral framework for another system – Christian democracy.⁴ In Chile, for example, such Catholics combined it to the 'purification of structures' theory of Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain and launched the National Front, a 'nonclass-struggle' movement meant to go beyond Marxism and capitalism into a 'New Christianity'.⁵ But everywhere, it also condemned capitalism and moved Christian democrats into the centre of the political arena. What is more, it encouraged social consciousness and opened Catholic learning habits not only to Maritain's ideas but also to those of other, more modern, socially-committed Catholics who had surged forth after the carnage of the Second World War.

One of the noblest and most profound of these thinkers was unquestionably the French philosopher Emmanuel Mounier. From the barricades of his magazine *Esprit*, Mounier, who had helped push the worker-priest movement before the German occupation and had advocated armed

2. *ibid.*, No. 28.

3. Encyclical *Quadragesimo*, 1931.

4. First proposed concretely in the encyclical *Rerum novarum*, 1891.

5. 'Declaración de Principios de la Falange Nacional', *Política y Espíritu* (No. 33), June 1948, p. 142. (See also Jacques Maritain, *L'Humanisme Integral*, Paris, Aubier, 1936.)

resistance during it, now unleashed a barrage against the 'unreal' church, which was blind, he said, to the alienating and therefore de-Christianing antagonisms generated by the profit-oriented Western political systems. Mounier refused to heed the church's condemnation of Marxism; on the contrary, he accepted Marx's theory of alienation and insisted on opening up dialogue between Christians and Marxists.⁶ He predicted the total failure of European Christian democratic parties because they were incapable of understanding the essential socialness of Christianity.⁷ Mounier's 'personalism', as his philosophy was called, advocated working towards the Kingdom of God through total commitment to God's children – the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the alienated. That commitment, he said, was only possible in the personalization of man's social responsibility towards his fellow man, that is, in socialism.⁸

The impact of Mounier's thought and actions – for he lived by what he preached – influenced many Catholic intellectuals. But it was the events of postwar agitation by the underdeveloped world's exploited peoples which irrigated fundamental soul-searching in the lower clergy – the priests and missionaries living in the actual scenes of misery. Seeing their flock constantly deprived, constantly rebelling, and constantly put down by foreign-wrought, dehumanizing machines (be they mercenary troops, élite corps, special advisers, bombers, or automatons called the police), these men of God began to cry out against the established disorder of the institutionalized greed known as the system. Meekly at first, then increasingly more vociferously, they denounced the injustices around them as injustices against God.

Far from all, the 'people's priests' felt comfortable in

6. Emmanuel Mounier, *Esprit* (No. 117), December 1945.

7. Mounier, *Esprit* (No. 121), April 1946.

8. Mounier, *Esprit* (No. 137), September 1947.

their new role. In Latin America, where US exploitation and economic domination (and often armed intervention) had been the longest and most visible and where, therefore, social consciousness required taking an anti-American stance, to do so meant risking the wrath of the local oligarchy (which ran the political parties), the local military (which served the oligarchy), the local press (which was owned by the oligarchy), and the local ecclesiastical hierarchy (which usually belonged to the same privileged minority). Yet how else could a parish priest relate to the *descamisados* (shirtless ones) of Buenos Aires, Cordoba, and Avellaneda than by supporting their strikes against such exploiting combines as Kaiser or General Motors? How else could they identify with the starving, landless Indians of Guatemala than by accompanying them on to the fallow estates of United Fruit? How else could they live as witnesses of Christ's brotherhood than by sheltering the runaway slave, sharing the oppressed's anger, and participating in the rebel's lust for social justice, especially when these rebels were obviously the majority?

In Latin America, where 93 per cent of the population professes Catholicism,⁹ where one out of every three Catholics of the world lives (one out of two by the end of the century), and where 40,000 priests reside (almost half foreign-born), Rome's stake is naturally too high to squander it through dogmatic slumber. It happened in Cuba, where the church's inability to understand the fundamental need for reconstructing society led to a conflict in 1960: one bishop and 120 priests were expelled, the leaders of the Catholic Action Group were jailed, and all Catholic organizational holdings were national-

9. A much smaller percentage practises it, of course. Still, according to one study of the Colombian peasantry, 62 per cent claimed the church as their first loyalty; 13 per cent, their country; 10 per cent, their family. See John P. Fowell, *Organizing Colombian Peasants*, Cambridge, Mass., Center for Rural Development, 1968, mimeo.

ized. Once the church's new attitude permeated Cuba, however, both sides became more flexible, and, from 1962 on, the conflict abated. But the church has to be careful that it does not happen again – in Cuba or elsewhere.

Because of the transistor radio, which had spread to every backwoods of the continent by the fifties, it was no longer possible to think that marginal peoples could be kept ignorant. Indeed, in my own travels throughout Latin America in the early sixties, I found no isolated area, whether in the sugar fields of Salta or the barren lands of the Sertao, where totally illiterate peasants were unaware of the Fidelistas' success. And it excited them. The clergyman on the spot had at least to make the effort to find out why. Often, when he did, he also gained new insights into his own mission. Thus, it was not so surprising to hear Father Emerson Negreiros tell his poor and exploited parishioners of Santa Cruz, in Brazil's north-eastern province of Rio Grande do Norte: 'You should raise a goat to give milk to your children. If the landlord comes to kill your goat, he is threatening the lives of your children. Do not let him kill your goat: kill him first.'¹⁰ Because the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Brazil and everywhere else was now deeply concerned with staying in step with the times, it did not interfere – or at least not too openly. And so, before it realized the seriousness of those steps, thousands of clerics were asking uncomfortable questions.

In the developed world, meanwhile, a similar process was unfolding. In France, the Algerian war pushed clergymen first to denounce tortures, then to support the FLN, finally to commit themselves unequivocally to work for a more humane society. In the United States and Germany, where capitalist laissez-faire affluence ushered in not happiness and charity but frustration, increased inequality, dehumaniza-

10. Emerson Negreiros, quoted in John Gerassi, *The Great Fear in Latin America*, New York, Macmillan, 1965, p. 98.

tion, and a militant New Left demanding a voice in decisions, churchmen found themselves increasingly more alienated from the young. Unless they joined the demonstrations and the freedom rides, unless they heard the voice of revolt, they seemed so relegated to insignificance that *Time*, a magazine ideologically incapable of understanding how people with hoards of money can possibly be unhappy, decided to ask, 'Is God Dead?'

But outside the Time and Life Building, not only priests but also bishops, nuncios, and even cardinals began to read the signs of the times. In 1955, the bishops of Latin America created a permanent council (CELAM) to study those signs, with the expressed purpose of achieving social results. And in the Vatican a new pope, a 'cardinal of the people' with a genuine sense of Christian brotherhood, set about humanizing the church in its entirety. With his encyclical *Pacem in terris*, in which he recognized in Marxism 'good elements worthy of approval' and stressed the link between peace and development, John XXIII launched the church into a new era of the 'living faith'.¹¹ And to put such commitment into practice, he asked his messengers to come to Rome to seek jointly the possible ways by which harmony could be real in this world as well as in the next. The resulting Council, almost a decade in duration, known as Vatican II, totally transformed the church by opening it up, for perhaps the first time in modern history, to the common man.

The fundamental question asked by the new church, however, was as old as man himself: What is the meaning of life?

11. Besides *Pacem in terris* (1963), see also John XXIII's bull *Humanae salutis* (25 December 1961), convoking Vatican II, and his Christmas message (22 December 1962). The same theme was later re-emphasized by Paul VI in his Christmas radio message of 1965, in his speech to UN delegates (25 June 1966), and in his encyclical *Christi matri* (4 October 1966).

But the context in which John XXIII asked it (in *Mater et magistra*, 1961, for example) and in which the Council echoed him (in the Pastoral Constitution *De Ecclesia*¹²) was social: What is the meaning of life for man living with his fellow men on this earth here and now? The answer they gave was that man should relate with love to his fellow men. How? By establishing his full equality, physically and spiritually, with all other men. In this light, the duty of the church, said both John and Paul, was 'to rescue and not to sit in judgement, to serve and not to be served'.¹³ Man is entitled not only to all the basic necessities of life ('God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being, and people'¹⁴) but also to dignity, respect, and collective fulfilment.¹⁵ Injustice, hunger, exploitation, racism, alienation, poverty, and war were all products of men's greed for wealth and power, they said. To be a good Christian, then, meant to stop such men, so that all men might benefit from the earth, as God intended. The church had caught up with Mounier – and with the times.

But this was only theory. In practice, the vast majority of the Catholic hierarchy continued to condemn the arrogance of those who dared oppose the established disorder. And most priests obeyed dutifully. Most, but not all. In Cuernavaca, Mexico, radical laymen, under the leadership of Monsignor Ivan Illich, established in 1961 the Intercultural Center for Documentation (CIDOC) to train young priests to put their social consciousness to work in the *barrios* (poor communities). Cardinal Franjo Seper was provoked to put the centre off limits to clergymen in 1969 on the grounds that the 'centre has pernicious effects on clerics because it encourages inde-

12. Which Paul VI proclaimed as *Gaudium et spes* on 7 December 1965.

13. *Gaudium et spes*, No. 3:2.

14. *ibid.*, No. 69:1.

15. *Mater et magistra*, No. 423.

pendent thinking'.¹⁶ In Santiago de Chile a Belgian Jesuit sociologist, Roger Vekemans, founded (in 1960) the Center for Latin-American Economic and Social Development (DESAL) to foster unions, cooperatives, collectives, and other action groups at the community level; he went on to influence a whole generation of young priests into social action.

In Brazil Alipio de Freitas, a Portuguese priest who had fled Angola after being accused of helping the revolutionaries there, tried to organize the people of the *favelas* (slums) of Rio until Jaime Cardinal de Barros Câmara stripped him of his pastoral duties. He then went on to the north-east and helped Francisco Julião set up the peasant leagues, until the army seized power in April 1964. Freitas was then arrested and condemned to twenty-five years in jail for subversion. Later, after making public his letter of protest to Cardinal de Barros Câmara, he escaped to the Mexican embassy, from where he was transported to Mexico. Then he disappeared into clandestineness in 'whatever place of the world' he felt most useful, as his letter (dated 26 June 1962) said:

My attitude, as a man and as a priest, can never be other than what it has always been and what it will always be: never, whatever the price, will I betray myself or the Gospel by abandoning the people to whom I have been destined to serve as priest. That is why I shall continue to fight, always and to the limits of my strength, as far as humanly possible, through every sacrifice.

The world which we want to build, the new fraternal world, which is our goal, deserves every sacrifice and is glorious enough to give meaning to our entire life. I have accepted the gospel, and I can never go backwards without losing my dignity. With serenity, I shall remain with the people – in Rio de Janeiro, in Maranhão, in whatever place of Brazil, in whatever place of the world. With serenity, with the certitude that the gospel of our age is to bring about agrarian reform, educational reform, urban reform, and reform for the workers in industry, to fight against

16. Franjo Seper, quoted in *Washington Post*, 24 June 1969.

political and economic imperialism, to fight against all forms of oppression . . .¹⁷

Another Brazilian Jesuit to suffer a similar fate was Francisco Lage Pessoa, born and bred in Minas Gerais. After founding the Young Catholic Workers Organization and being elected to Congress in the Labour Party, he had dedicated his efforts to setting up peasant unions. Arrested by the military in April 1964, he was tortured and kept in jail until May 1965, when he was freed on habeas corpus; then, he went into hiding. Condemned again in October for 'trying to deliver Brazil to Vietnam' (sic), he managed to gain asylum in the Mexican embassy. Since December 1965 he has been working in an impoverished parish in Mexico and writing: against capitalism, 'which expresses itself in the individual by the exacerbation of selfishness'; in favour of armed struggle 'because it is the enemy who is the aggressor'; for never-ending commitment, since 'Christ promised us not a triumphant church in this world but, on the contrary, a church which never stops fighting for men and with men, wherever this mysterious animal lives and suffers'.¹⁸ Lage Pessoa continues:

The Christian must be able to choose in total freedom the means he needs to accomplish the task of struggling for the realization of true fraternity and justice as demanded by the gospel. He has the right and obligation to use all the means he judges adequate to try to establish social systems which genuinely help the people seek this happiness. If this freedom, which has been so heralded – especially since the Vatican II Council – is denied to Christians, all struggle will be in vain, and it would be better for the people, in such a case, for an established church which disfigures the true face of Christ to disappear.¹⁹

17. Alipio de Freitas, in *Cristianismo y Revolución* (Buenos Aires, No. 1), September 1966.

18. Francisco Lage Pessoa, quoted in Alain Gheerbrant, *L'Eglise Rebelle d'Amérique Latine*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1966, pp. 324, 331, 334.

19. *ibid.*, p. 326.

In Lima, in 1964, meanwhile, a priest named Salomón Bolo Hidalgo was so shocked by the living conditions of the poor and by the inability and unwillingness of the ruling élite to better their lot that he joined the clandestine National Liberation Front and became one of its co-presidents. Jailed in 1965, he was denounced by the cardinal of Lima for being a traitor, a Communist, and an advocate of violence, all of which meant that he did not love his fellow man. On 1 September 1965, from his cell in San Quintín prison, Bolo answered the cardinal in an open letter. It read, in part, as follows:

If you, Mr Cardinal, loved your neighbour, you would have given your wealth to the poor, because Christ's order is specifically aimed at bishops and cardinals: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor ...' (Matthew 19:21).²⁰ ... Have you forgotten all this, Mr Cardinal, with your luxurious car, palaces, and regal train, with which we could dress the poor? Have they forgotten it, the bishops and the religious groups, so full of riches, who rant so much against Communism but give nothing or only a few bits of crumbs to the poor? So let us not talk about love and hate or Marxism and Pharisaic Christianity. We are dealing with deeds and facts.

You talk of country, but I must remind you that 'country' does not mean the hundred privileged families. Country, besides history, traditions, and territory, means people, the people who labour to fertilize fields, open roads, move machines, serve in the army, and create scientists, artists, and heroes. These people deserve the best. But you, Mr Cardinal, by your deeds, prefer one hundred superficial and exploiting families who organize balls while the people wail over their dead, who attend races, blessed by you, where the horses receive better care than the children of Peru.

The patriots are not those who send their millions to foreign banks but those who, ignored by the church and state, take their place in the sublime struggle against exploitation.

20. *New American Catholic Edition: The Holy Bible*, Douay-Confraternity trans., New York, Benziger, 1961.

The patriots are not those who deliver our national wealth to thieving imperialism but those proud Peruvians who demand that Peru's riches belong to Peruvians ...

The main culprits for the present convulsion are not the Communists but Yankee imperialists and the perjurers and Pharisees who use religion as a puppet show ...

The people are no longer a flock of sheep, as before. And the church must change itself, not by creating new liturgies, for which it would be ridiculous to convene an ecumenical council, but by condemning the bombs, the imperialists, and the colonialists, by giving the right to the people to choose their bishops, by supporting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ... There is a new Christ – the exploited peoples of the world. There is a new murdering Barrabas – imperialism and its lackeys. Let not the same error be committed now – forgiving Barrabas and crucifying Christ. Let the bishops of Peru fulfil their duty, or they shall pass into history as bishops who condemned the righteous and the patriots – and destroyed the church ...²¹

And there were others – priests who fought the military 'gorillas' in Argentina, the Somoza bullies in Nicaragua, the Stroessner-US Aid Mission in Paraguay. But it was in Colombia that the new church really gained its first apostle. Here was a priest so dedicated to the poor, to the humble, to the alienated, so willing to sacrifice himself to bear witness to the fraternity and brotherhood of the Kingdom of God, that his life and example would reverberate throughout the church for decades to come. His name was Camilo Torres Restrepo.

Camilo was born (in Bogotá, on 3 February 1929) neither poor nor humble. His father, Calixto Torres Umaña, was a well-established paediatrician, while his mother, Isabel Restrepo Gaviria, was descended from one of Colombia's most

21. Salomón Bolo Hidalgo, in *Arauco* (Chile, No. 70), November 1965.

aristocratic families.²² Strong-willed and outspoken, Doña Isabel was a feminist who often took to the streets to demonstrate against her sex's inequalities, a matriarch who ran her home and her four children²³ with a firm hand, but also a typical Latin-American mother who spoiled her youngest, Camilo. He was a 'child like any other', she has said, 'except quite rebellious and a little restless. He did all the stupid things any child does and got occasional spankings. I was the one who hit him. His father didn't like to.'²⁴

When Camilo was three, the family moved to Belgium to be near Geneva where Doctor Torres was a scientific consultant to the League of Nations. But because Camilo became very sickly, Doña Isabel moved to Barcelona: 'We kept taking him to the beach. One day we enrolled him in a German school. We sent him in the morning, and he started crying right away; my mother, who loved him dearly, was very concerned because he would not stop. So at lunch time we took him home, and he never went back. He was a spoiled little baby to us all.'²⁵

Back in Bogotá, at the age of six, Camilo was kept sheltered at home (with a private tutor to teach him to read and write) so as to protect him from more illness. "Ay mamita," Camilo used to say to me then, "I want to be a *chino* of the streets."²⁶ At eight, Camilo finally entered the outside world – a German school in Bogotá:

22. One of Doña Isabel's great-great-grandfathers, José Felix Restrepo, freed the Colombian slaves. Another distant relative, Carlos Lleras Restrepo, was the country's President from 1966 to 1970.

23. Two from her first husband, a German entrepreneur who died five years after their marriage, and two from Torres – Fernando, now a neurologist in Minneapolis, and Camilo.

24. Isabel Restrepo de Torres, interview by Luis Baez, *Oclae* (Havana), February 1970, p. 43.

25. *ibid.*, p. 44.

26. Isabel Restrepo de Torres, 'Yo le Llamaba el Precursor', *Vispera* (Bogotá), May 1967, p. 56. Chinos are Bogotá's street urchins from destitute families.

I was afraid for him of the big boys, so I asked Fernando, his older brother, to keep an eye on him. But on the very first day, a German child spoke badly of Colombia, and Camilo jumped him, socked him, and knocked out two of his teeth. From then on he remained the school big shot: the other kids were afraid of him. At nine, Camilo founded a school newspaper, *El Puma*, which he wrote, printed, and sold himself. He called it a 'weekly daily, appearing monthly'. He used to denounce his teachers. When the school was closed because of World War II, Camilo went to Quinta Mutis, a religious school. He was very popular and was elected president of all the sporting clubs; so, naturally, he failed that year. He was then twelve. Transferred to the Liceo Cervantes, which was not run by priests, he got his bachelor's and started writing for *La Razón*, the newspaper of a local politician, which was read only by the politician and Camilo, I think. His writing was limited to blasting teachers.²⁷

But he was graduated with honours, including, by unanimous choice, the prize for all-round best student, and he enrolled at the national university to study law.

'At this time he was not at all leading a good life,' remembers his brother Fernando.

He was running around with a wild set and had no interest in religion whatever. We did not think much of the Dominicans who were his teachers, but later some French Dominicans visited, and perhaps it was then that Camilo became interested in a group of young people who were devout, and especially in a young girl. He was very much in love with her, but she entered the convent and so there was no question of marriage. It was not long after that he announced that he wanted to be a priest and that he was going to join the Dominicans.²⁸

'He left me a note explaining his decision,' says Camilo's mother. 'I immediately ran to the railroad station and found

27. *ibid.*

28. Fernando Torres, quoted in Dorothy Day, *Camilo Torres: Priest and Revolutionary*, London, Sheed & Ward, 1968, pp. 9-10.

him; then a great scene arose, with huge crowds watching us, as I shouted that he was a minor and couldn't go, and he yelled he would, and I said he would go over my dead body, because I'd stay in front of the locomotive. Camilo answered: "As God wills." ²⁹ But she willed otherwise, and, with two policemen, she dragged him home by force. But Doña Isabel then relented and allowed Camilo to enter the diocesan seminary. 'I believe it was a mistake for me to do that,' she says. 'The other boys who went to the Dominicans returned within three months; the only one to become a priest was Camilo.' ³⁰ Perhaps the explanation is simply that the Dominicans Camilo wanted to join were in the monastery of Chiquinquirá, far from Bogotá, while the diocesan seminary was in the capital proper. 'Don't misunderstand me. I have great respect for Doña Isabel,' Gustavo Gutiérrez Merino, a Peruvian priest and noted sociologist who was very close to Camilo, told me. 'But there is no doubt that she just had to be everywhere he was – always.' ³¹

'Why did you go to the seminary?' Guzmán asked Camilo later. 'Family circumstances, a disappointing love affair, interior emptiness, a religious awakening?'

'A little bit of all that,' he told me. 'Actually what happened was the following. During one of my vacations I went to Llano. The immensity of that place, the silence, the tropical explosion of life, of sun, impressed me very much. I began to be disturbed. I wanted to be alone. I realized that life as I understood it, as I was living it, lacked meaning. I thought I could be more useful socially. I was faced then with the great problem: where and how could I be more useful? I analysed the professions, one by one: medicine, law, engineering, chemistry . . . ? None of these.

29. Restrepo de Torres, 'Yo le Llamaba', p. 56.

30. Isabel Restrepo de Torres, *Frente Popular*, 15 February 1967; quoted in Germán Guzmán, *Camilo Torres*, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1969, p. 5.

31. Gustavo Gutiérrez Merino, personal interview, Rome, October 1969.

What about the seminary? I told myself that the immensity of Llano had helped me find God. It was the solution. It seemed to me a total solution. The most logical. I returned to Bogotá, determined to enter the monastery of the Dominicans.'

'Why?' Camilo was silent. Then he went on:

'There was an explosion. My mother was fiercely opposed. Finally we compromised on the diocesan seminary, and so I entered ...'

'But why were you attracted to the Dominicans?'

'Perhaps because I connected the silence of Llano with the silence of the cloisters. I wanted silence, meditation, tranquillity. Then, too, the talks of the French priests had fired me up.'³²

'I often discussed with Camilo his interest in the Dominicans,' says Monsignor François Houtart, the sociologist who heads the Centre for Socio-religious Research at the Catholic University of Louvain, in Belgium.

There was then a new group of French Dominicans in Bogotá, that group which was the most progressive and was later expelled and went to Brazil. But the group was then in Bogotá and attracted young people who were progressive. These Dominicans were very Maritainian; they had a new vision of Christianity as commitment to the social aspects of life, and Camilo was, after all, already relatively quite socially conscious. At seventeen, he had given a lecture at the National University on the causes of conflicts between students and the ruling class. [This theme is developed in Chapter 8 of this book.] But there was another reason: he was feeling that his temperament was too extroverted, that he was not at all systematic in his work, and that he needed a frame in which to live.³³

In any case, Camilo was an exemplary student at Louvain. His relationship to his fellow seminarians was warm and open, and his primary interest was social, 'not sociopolitical', says Houtart,

32. Germán Guzmán, *Camilo Torres*, p. 14.

33. François Houtart, personal interview, Louvain, February 1970.

but social within the context of the church. I remember that, when I was passing through Bogotá in 1954, before it was decided that he would come to Louvain, we discussed it then. I had just met him for the first time. He invited me to speak to his group, a small circle studying social problems – what social actions a priest should undertake according to the teachings – but he as yet had made no analysis of these problems.

That interest was strong enough to convince his cardinal, Crisanto Luque, then archbishop of Bogotá, that Camilo should study sociology, and he advanced his ordination so he might enrol at Louvain by the beginning of the school year. First he invited the twenty-five-year-old priest to deliver his first Mass from the cathedral of Bogotá; then, says his mother, 'we went to Louvain'.³⁴

'She only stayed one year,' says Houtart,

he, four. He had a tremendous influence on the students – as a priest. He was very close to them and always active. Consequently, his work was not always very profound, but he had that quick brilliance which could always get him through. But his focus was increasingly social. With Gustavo Perez,³⁵ he created a Colombian-Belgian group whose main interest was social action, and he was in close contact with the *Esprit* group here. It became quite clear that Camilo was torn between science, in this case sociological research, and action. But he always faced these options as a priest, within his vision of his pastoral duties.³⁶

After obtaining his master's in social science, Camilo stayed in Louvain as vice rector of the Latin-American College, a seminary founded by Belgian bishops to train Latin-American priests. With many of them, he often journeyed throughout Europe and put in work stints with Abbé Pierre,

34. Restrepo de Torres, interview, p. 46.

35. Who returned to Colombia, after teaching at Oxford, and in 1970 worked in an impoverished parish, coming into conflict with his hierarchy.

36. Houtart, interview. Also see his 'Camilo Torres en Tanto que Sacerdote', *Víspera*, May 1967, p. 68.

the parish priest who lived with the homeless as they did, in abandoned houses, in alleyways, and under the bridges of the Seine. In 1958, Camilo returned to Colombia to carry out the research for his doctoral dissertation on the socio-economic conditions of Bogotá. He wrote it but never got his doctorate, since he never defended it. Appointed lecturer at Bogotá's National University, then its chaplain as well, Camilo threw himself into the struggle of his countrymen for liberation – first as a sociologist, then as a politician, finally as a revolutionary, and always, in his own eyes at least, as a priest.

In academia today, it is as a sociologist that Camilo is taken most seriously. He did not contribute much original work to the field, but he did undertake some studies in depth that help one to understand the Colombia of his time. His dissertation (of which only two chapters survive) on the city of Bogotá shows him to have been tightly bound by a traditional sociological format, which is quite understandable for a thesis. He also revealed a slight ideological naïveté when he said, for example (Chapter 2, below), 'Commerce was in the hands of individuals rather than institutions', based on the fact that Colombia's first bank was founded only in 1870. Camilo assumed that unless business is officially regulated in some way, it is not institutionalized. In the case of Colombia this was quite erroneous, since the individual businessmen who operated in the stratified society that Bogotá certainly was so controlled commerce that it was a *de facto* institution.³⁷

But the more Camilo did research, the more he understood that the criteria (that is, the ideological approach) used to carry out research predetermines its usefulness. In the second

37. See, for example, Mario Arrubla, *Estudios Sobre el Subdesarrollo Colombiano*, Medellín, Editorial La Oveja Negra, 1969, the best work on the subject that I know of. For a general criticism of traditional economics in Latin America, see the work of Andre Gunder Frank, specifically *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1967.

chapter extant of his dissertation (Chapter 3, below), Camilo was still motivated by traditional norms of research – what is called the American, non-ideological approach. Nevertheless, an increasing awareness of class conflict crept into his analysis. And by the time he showed up in Buenos Aires to deliver his paper ‘Building an Authentic Latin-American Sociology’, he knew that scientific methodology is just as apt to be dominated by cultural imperialism as trade is by economic imperialism. He denounced such dependency but lashed out against nominalism on the grounds that its definitional system is a mask for subjectivism. While this is perfectly true about nominalism, the grounds for Camilo’s criticism are weak; so-called objectivity also bases itself on a series of definitions which are considered objective only because most scientists agree to them. Camilo himself was uncomfortable with his criticism, and, hence, he switched his attack to ‘cowardice disguised as objectivity’ as well to ‘demagoguery disguised as a scientific value’. What he really wanted, but could not yet formulate, was a committed sociology. The best he could do in 1961 was to state that ‘it is most important for our sociologists to have a sincere attitude of self-criticism in light of the present local problems’.

Most Western scientists are horrified by the committed approach to research. Raised in capitalism’s pragmatism, imbued with the myth of pluralism, they insist that, whatever the individual scientist’s personal motivation, his attitude in evaluating empirically verifiable evidence must be neutral. Science is not at the service of ideology, they say. Given the freedom to carry out his research unhampered, the scientist may produce ammunition for fascism, capitalism, socialism, communism, or all four. But he does not do it for any particular political ideology, at least he thinks not.

For a long time, scientists in the underdeveloped world, trained in the West and influenced by its methodology, agreed. But in the last decade, a rebellion has been brewing.

In the first place, some younger scientists have said that no researcher works in a vacuum. He has already been greatly determined by the mores, the life style, the myths, and the economic conditions of his society before he undertakes his research. What is more, his interest is dictated by the need to solve his society's specific problems. And there are huge differences between the societies of, say, Colombia and the United States. The motivation of a sociologist in the United States (fame, money, academic advancement, influence, elimination of specific social ills, or stimulation of reforms) is totally different from the motivation of Colombian sociologists (fame outside the country, a job outside the country, influence in ruling circles, strengthening of the church, coping with the violence that has killed almost half a million peasants in one decade, stimulation of nationalism, antagonism toward imperialism, or outright violent revolution). If 'neutrality' works as a criterion in the United States, it is *because* the American system profits from it. But in Colombia, such neutrality satisfies the United States, not Colombia. In other words, these young Latin-American scientists say, American non-ideological scientific theories are as much part of the United States' bias as the underdeveloped world's committed theories.

Though Camilo was still very traditional in his study of 'The Radio Schools of Sutatenza' (Chapter 7), he attacked the problem of 'Urbanization and Urban Reform' (Chapter 10) with the 'preconceived' idea that Colombia needed both. This so-called preconception, generated by his growing social awareness, led him to recognize the 'scientific' value of 'mystiques' and the achievements of Cuba and the Soviet Union. Clearly, however, Camilo remained a *Western* scientist as long as he considered himself primarily a sociologist.³⁸

38. Except in his footnotes, where he never conformed to 'accepted' academic standards (as the reader will see). Though these notes are clear enough for the social scientist who wishes to follow them up

He was at best a reformist, radical for Colombia, but liberal in his problem-solving-by-experts approach. It is little wonder, then, that American sociologists recognized him as an important contributor to the field when he produced 'Social Change and Rural Violence in Colombia' (Chapter 11), Camilo's best and, in a strict sense, his last sociological treatise. In it, his motivation was still reform: he hoped that the revolutionary subcultures created by *la violencia* would force the ruling classes to undertake a serious developmental programme. He was relatively unaware, as yet, that *la violencia* served a very useful function to those classes and that they were now trying to end it precisely because that function (the division of the masses into two camps hating each other rather than the rulers) was no longer beneficial to the ruling classes (who had united into one coordinated oligarchy). Camilo was not yet a revolutionary in 1963.

But he was moving to the Left rapidly. When he returned from Louvain, he had gone right back into his 'natural' environment, as Canon Houtart put it: 'The ease with which he could relate to his fellow students in Louvain made him assume that students were his normal constituency.'³⁹ In 1959 Camilo had been one of the founders of the first faculty of sociology at the National University. He then also became one of the University's chaplains. Very popular with students, he spent long hours discussing their problems with them. And, perhaps partly because of their stated interests in social action, he organized a group of them to go with him into the suburban neighbourhood of Tunjuelito, where together they tried to foster community consciousness and help launch community projects.

In June 1962 a student strike at the University was crushed

(and I have thus left them as Camilo wrote them), they show that Camilo was primarily interested in content, not form. At heart he was always an activist.

39. Houtart, interview.

when the government dismissed ten student leaders without hearings (see Chapter 8). Torres objected. The rector called him a clown. The students elected Torres rector. The official rector closed the University and Cardinal Concha Córdoba, who had succeeded Crisanto Luque as archbishop of Bogotá, ordered Camilo to resign both as chaplain and teacher. Camilo obeyed, and he joined the Higher School of Public Administration as dean of the Institute of Social Administration, a position that entitled him to sit on the governing board of the Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform (INCORA).

Camilo threw himself into his new functions with passion. He set up a pilot cooperative farm community in Yopal, founded schools, set up training centres for shoemakers and tailors, and organized peasant grievance meetings. 'After each contact with the agrarian community he was filled with growing rebellion and an intense desire to do something positive for the people,' said his friend Guzmán.⁴⁰ And, of course, the more he did, the more he clashed with the ecclesiastical hierarchy. One day he sat down and concocted a 'people's song', which is not very good but is lots of fun. Somebody made copies of the words, and one copy got to Camilo's superiors. The poem became proof that Camilo was a Communist.

*Colombiano
despierta valiente
en conquista de nuestra libertad
mira al pueblo cómo está presente
y no quiere sufrir más.*

*La revolución en marcha
contra el Estado asesino
logrará el triunfo sin mancha
de obreros y campesinos.*

*La riqueza de Colombia
no es para una sola clase
lograremos la victoria
para aquel que la trabaje.*

*Colombia,
Be brave, wake up
To battle for our liberty;
Look at the people before you
Who don't want to suffer any more.*

*The revolution is begun
Against the assassin state;
It will succeed triumphantly
For workers and peasants.*

*The riches of Colombia
Are not only for one class.
We will obtain victory
For the workers in the country.*

40. Guzmán, op. cit., p. 36.

*Los de abajo soportamos
la violencia heroicamente
ahora le toca el turno
a la clase dirigente.*

We support those from below
Who have heroically suffered violence
But now it comes in turn
To the ruling class.

*Víctimas de la violencia
fueron solo campesinos
la estructura dirigente
se plegó a los asesinos.*

Victims of the violence
Were always peasants.
The ruling structure
Was pledged to the assassins.

*En el cielo manda Dios
y solo en el cielo manda
en la tierra de nosotros
la gente que es colombiana.*

God rules in heaven
And only in heaven does He rule,
In this land of ours must rule
The Colombian people.

[Added later]

*Los pobres en nuestra patria
han luchado divididos,
pero ahora están resueltos
a formar un FRENTE UNIDO.*

The poor in our country
Have been divided in their fight,
But now they are resolved
To form a UNITED FRONT.⁴¹

By the time Camilo went back to Louvain to read his paper on planning and the role of Christians to the Pro Mundi Vita in September 1964, he was clearly convinced that capitalism retarded genuine growth. Yet in that speech (Chapter 16) he was still advocating liberal-socialist reforms, not genuine structural changes. And yet, by then, he certainly had a good grounding in the harsh facts of Colombian life: 3.6 per cent of the landowners own 64.2 per cent of the farming areas; 56 per cent of the population own 4.2 per cent of farm lands; 68 per cent of peasant houses have dirt floors, 92.6 per cent lack water, and 95.8 per cent have no electricity; 30 per cent of the children cannot get an education because there are not enough primary schools, 86 per cent are shut out of secondary schools, and 97 per cent from university; for every US dollar invested directly in Colombia, \$2.27 is taken out in profits and dividends; for each US dollar

41. Spanish version from Germán Guzmán, Camilo: El Cura Guerrillero, Bogotá, 1967, pp. 14-15; English version from Guzmán, op. cit., pp. 33-4.

loaned to Colombia, the United States takes back \$1.50 in interest and amortization.⁴² These facts and Camilo's now considerable experience with how peasants lived should have made him hit hard. As a sociologist, in that speech, he did not. As a Christian, however, he did, much too hard for his hierarchy back home. Camilo called for revolutionary commitment and a united front with Marxists.

The idea of a united front was then very much on his mind. Thinking more and more as a politician and priest *engagé*, he had actually thought of writing out a programme for such a front. In December 1964, after a confrontation at the University between students and super-oligarch (and future President) Lleras Restrepo, Camilo predicted that the 'social conflicts' to come may well be violent (Chapter 17) and decided to prepare for them; he sat down and drafted a platform for a united popular movement (Chapter 18). He passed it around to his friends, to some trusted political comrades, and to the few Communists he knew well. They discussed it with him, suggested a few changes and one serious addition – a clause on the rights of women (Chapter 20). On 22 May 1965 Camilo read the platform for a United Front at a student rally in his honour; it was clearly revolutionary. Three days later, Cardinal Concha issued this statement: 'In the platform for political and social action presented or supported by Father Torres, there are points which are irreconcilable with the doctrine of the church.'⁴³

On 15 June 1965, at a conference in Grancolombiano University, Camilo said:

The economic, military, ecclesiastical, and political powers will

42. Report of the Bank of the Republic, Bogotá, November 1966; *El Financiamiento Externo de América Latina*, United Nations Report, New York, 1964; *Economía Colombiana*, official statistics of the Contraloría General de la República, yearly.

43. Luis Cardinal Concha Córdoba, quoted in Guzmán, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

wage war with the people in the face of the revolution which is approaching, a revolution which consists of a change of structures. This change implies violence for those who retain power. But violence is not excluded from the Christian ethic, because if Christianity is concerned with eliminating the serious evils which we suffer and with saving us from the continuous violence in which we live without possible solution, the ethic is to be violent once and for all in order to destroy the violence which the economic minorities exercise against the people.⁴⁴

After defining the minorities as the 24 families who own most of what is valuable in Colombia not controlled by American monopolies, with which the 24 work hand-in-glove, Camilo shouted: 'Not one step back. Down with Yankee imperialism. Long live the revolution. Away with the oligarchies. Power for the people, until death.'⁴⁵

On 18 June, Cardinal Concha again condemned Camilo: 'Torres has consciously separated himself from the doctrines and directives of the church ... in so far as [he] proclaims a violent revolution with seizure of power at the very moment that the country is involved in a crisis caused in no small part by the violence which he is making great efforts to promote ...'⁴⁶ The next day, in Medellín, Camilo said: 'I am of the middle class, of bourgeois extraction. But I have come to the masses who will make the Colombian revolution, and I demand that I be admitted as a revolutionary, promising that from this day I will be completely dedicated as a revolutionary.'⁴⁷ In an interview the next day, he said that church properties should be expropriated (Chapter 23). The rupture with the church was inevitable. On 24 June, Camilo again asked for laicization (Chapter 24). He had done so before, on 20 March 1965, in a letter to Cardinal Concha

44. Camilo Torres, quoted in *El Tiempo*, 16 June 1965.

45. Camilo Torres, quoted in *La República*, 16 June 1965.

46. Concha, quoted in Guzmán, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

47. Camilo Torres, quoted in *El Vespertino*, 19 June 1965.

asking for a private audience.⁴⁸ It had been granted on 22 June. When Camilo returned from it, Guzmán asked him how it went.

'It was like this,' he replied. 'We said hello to one another. I told him I wanted to ask him to tell me which were my erroneous theses and which were the points irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church.'

'He told me: "My answer was given in my statement of 18 June."

"But what I wanted," I argued with him, "for the tranquillity of my conscience, is that your Eminence should show where my error is."

"It is in my statement. The priest should not get mixed up in politics."

"I believed, your Eminence, that both as a priest and as a simple Christian, I could look for dialogue."

"No, I have nothing more to add. Everything was said in my statement."

'The Cardinal stood up. I left. The interview could not have lasted more than five minutes.'⁴⁹

Cardinal Concha ordered his laicization on 26 June. During the night of 6-7 July, Camilo journeyed to a secret hide-out to meet Fabio Vásquez Castaño, commander in chief of the Army of National Liberation (ELN), the guerrillas of central Colombia.⁵⁰ The two men became friends – and agreed on both strategy (principles) and tactics (means).⁵¹ They ap-

48. Quoted in Guzmán, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

49. Camilo Torres, quoted in Guzmán, *op. cit.*, pp 24-5

50. The ELN has an independent, Marxist-Leninist revolutionary line. There are other guerrillas fighting in Colombia; the Colombian Armed Revolutionary Forces (FARC), which is pro-Russian; and two Maoist groups.

51. Francisco González, 'Camilo, Revolucionario', *Pensamiento Crítico* (Havana), July 1967, p. 143. González was writing as the representative of the ELN in Cuba.

parently also agreed on when Camilo would join the ELN, which he was eager to do (Chapter 26). But first his task was to build up the United Front. In that task, Camilo was indefatigable. He spoke to workers, students, peasants, young Catholics, independent Conservatives, unaffiliated Liberals. He edited and often wrote most of his weekly newspaper, *Frente Unido*, which was sold by volunteers on the streets. (Doña Isabel often so volunteered). He joined strikes, marched on picket lines, resisted the police. He was jailed in Bogotá, beaten and jailed by the police in Medellín, and wounded by Girardot on 31 October. He travelled throughout the hinterlands, setting up cells which he called *comandos*.

But he would not do it alone. Most of the people working with Camilo did not share his outlook. Though they all claimed to be in favour of the United Front, some wanted the Front to exclude Communists; others wanted to exclude those affiliated to the established parties. Some wanted to run for elective offices, which Camilo opposed (Chapters 27 and 28). Others, especially the Christian Democrats, abandoned him once he took off his cassock. 'I took off my cassock to be more truly a priest,' he told journalists.⁵² To Colombian Catholics, his message was direct: 'The Catholic who is not a revolutionary is living in mortal sin.'⁵³

These efforts were to no avail. The peasant, the worker, and the student loved him. But the United Front apparatus, ridden by sectarianism, constantly destroyed Camilo's message. Each time he was out of Bogotá, proselytizing or organizing, the newspaper he left behind alienated another

52. Camilo Torres, quoted in Marjorie Hope, 'Revolution in Colombia?', *Liberation*, September 1966; and in Jean Pierre Sergeant, *Voz Proletaria: Seminario del Partido Comunista Colombiano*, 17 February 1967.

53. Camilo Torres, quoted in Adolfo Gilly, *Marcha* (Montevideo); translated in Atlas, May 1966.

group of revolutionaries. From the 50,000 copies sold with the first issue on 26 August 1965, *Frente Unido* dropped to 15,000 with issue 13, 9 December – the last. Camilo was despondent and impatient. The hour of decision was nearing. As if sensing it, the oligarchy offered him an embassy post he wanted; the cardinal, a trip to Louvain; the Rockefeller Foundation, a scholarship to the United States.⁵⁴ It was time. ‘One night, he simply told me he wouldn’t come home to sleep,’ Doña Isabel remembers. ‘I was used to that, so I didn’t pay any attention. It never occurred to me. It was toward the end of October.’⁵⁵

At 7.50 p.m. on 18 October 1965, Camilo Torres left the office of the *Frente Unido*, hailed a cab, went to a hospital, came out the side entrance, walked three blocks, hailed another cab, rode to a particular street corner, walked three blocks, and came up to a parked car with two men waiting inside. Camilo then turned to the two friends who had accompanied him, embraced them, and said, ‘I am going to the mountains. I hope we will meet there some day.’ He got in and drove away. Two days later he was incorporated, as a simple soldier, into the Army of National Liberation, which was fighting in Santander.

Except for posing for leaflets showing him with beard, beret, and rifle and for writing a message to Colombians (Chapter 47), Camilo was treated just as he asked – as a simple soldier. He trained, he learned to shoot, he took his turn at kitchen patrol and guard duty. And he fought. Then, on 15 February 1966, in the area known as the ‘Cement Patio’ of Santander province, his detachment ambushed a military patrol, killing four soldiers and causing the rest to disperse. A second patrol arrived immediately and counter-attacked. During the battle, Camilo advanced to pick up a fallen army rifle. He was hit in the shoulder. ‘They hit me

54. Guzmán, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

55. Restrepo de Torres, interview, p. 48

but I can still move,' he shouted. Fabio Vásquez ordered him to retreat, but he did not hear. He continued to advance, firing as he crawled. Another bullet hit him. This time, it was fatal.

Recklessly, four peasant guerrillas tried to recover his body. All four were killed. A government lieutenant then advanced. He was hit and fell next to Camilo. When the guerrillas withdrew, the government identified Camilo and buried him in an unmarked grave. To this day, his mother does not know where his grave is (see Appendix A). A few days later, Fabio Vásquez issued a communique explaining how Camilo had died. Then, he added the following tribute:

Camilo died as a hero, conscious that leaders must set an example. We who will attempt to be legitimate heirs of his thinking and human greatness wish to place his sacrifice in perspective before the masses. We have many things to learn from it. His life was clear and pure. He united the scientific conception of revolutionary war, considering it the only effective way to develop the fight for freedom, with a profound Christianity, which he extended and practised as a limitless love for the poor, the exploited, and the oppressed and as a complete dedication to the battle for their liberation. He died in the work of guiding the people to the seizure of power, but he only died physically. His body was outrageously treated by the government's assassins. Proof of that is the facial bruises which appear in the photographs in the press. The people will make them pay for this act of miserable cruelty.

But his thinking grows more important with his martyrdom. The justification of his theses takes progressive hold of the consciences of the workers. As a tribute to his memory, we will make popular unity, on which he insisted so much, a living reality as soon as possible. Thousands of peasants, workers, students, professionals, and dedicated men will replace him in the ranks of the ELN with their physical and moral presence. Our force will grow in strength, guided by the great spirit of Camilo. His remembrance fills our hearts with fighting spirit and hatred for

the mercenaries of the oligarchy. Our people will grind into dust those responsible for the death of their great leader. Joined to him, we will redouble our eagerness for the fight until death because, as Camilo taught us, 'a people that fights until death will always obtain victory'.⁵⁶

The death of Camilo pleased Colombia's ruling classes, though they tried to sound magnanimous in their obituaries. *El Tiempo*, top organ of the oligarchy, said: 'Unfortunately, his very vocation of service, which was generous and unselfish in him, carried him to extremes and led him first to separate from the priesthood and then to change his cassock for the clothes of a guerrilla, in a country where today such activity lacks all justification and even all revolutionary significance.'⁵⁷ Monsignor Victor Wiedemann, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Medellín, added: 'One thinks that, because of the many difficulties which he had in his home life and social life, Camilo Torres incurred some mental imbalance which led him to the catastrophe.'⁵⁸

But the populace responded with eulogies. Students demonstrated in his honour, and most university buildings in the country were draped in black crêpe. The Trade Union Confederation of Colombian Workers (CSTC) saluted him in the name of its 170,000 members and condemned 'the methods of cruelty and violence enforced by the ruling classes under the direction of the American military mission'.⁵⁹

In the lower clergy some reactions were considerably courageous. Eduardo Arango Trujillo, a Franciscan priest, praised Camilo, on Radio Juventud, and accused the hier-

56. Fabio Vásquez, communiqué dated February 1966; in Camilo Torres, *Liberación o Muerte*, Havana, Instituto del Libro, 1967, p. 177.

57. Editorial, *El Tiempo*, 18 February 1966; quoted in Guzmán, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

58. Victor Wiedemann, *El Espectador*, 17 February 1966.

59. Quoted in *El Espacio*, 17 February 1966.

archy of his death because of its links with the system.⁶⁰ Tristan de Athayde, an orthodox Catholic philosopher, placed Camilo among 'the purest, the most noble, the most authentic exponents and martyrs of the new Christianity'.⁶¹ Funeral masses took place in scores of parish churches, as well as in Paris, Cuernavaca, Mexico (with full approval of Bishop Mendez Arceo), and Louvain. But it was Father Carlos Perez Herrera, pastor of Santa Ana (Colombia), who most clearly foresaw the future: 'Father Torres has opened up a high road on which many idealists who seek justice will walk.'⁶²

Of course I had heard of Camilo long before 1966 and indeed had met him various times. [Juan García Elorrio, a young Argentine lay priest, told me in Havana during an OLAS⁶³ convention in August, 1967.] But his death as a guerrilla so shook me that I began feeling guilty. 'What was I really doing for the liberation of my people?' I kept asking myself. Christ's mission on earth was not to save individual's souls: it was to *liberate* their souls, that is, to help them gain their fulfilment as men, as social beings. Christ is love and I wanted to be a man of love; yet love cannot exist in a master-slave relationship. What Camilo's death meant to me was that I had to dedicate myself to smash the master-slave relationship in Argentina. I had to fight with the slaves, the people, as *they* fought, not as an élitist teacher who tells them what is good and what is evil and then goes back to his study to read Saint Augustine but as a genuine participant, *with* them not *for* them, in their misery, their failings, their violence. If I could not do this, I was not a man of the people, that is, a man

60. Eduardo Arango Trujillo, quoted in *El Tiempo*, 22 February 1966.

61. Tristan de Athayde, *Gaceta Tercer Mundo*, September-October 1966, p. 11.

62. Carlos Perez Herrera, quoted in *El Siglo*, 3 March 1966.

63. The Organization of Latin American Solidarity, where revolutionaries from the continent gathered to exchange experiences and try to work out a way to coordinate their efforts.

of God, that is, a believer in brotherhood, which is the meaning of love. Either I fought or I was a phony.⁶⁴

García Elorrio's first step was to launch, in September 1966, six months after Camilo's death, the magazine *Cristianismo y Revolución*. In his first editorial he said:

This is what we wish to reflect: the meaning, the urgency, the means, the movements of the commitment of Christians in the revolution.

In sum, for all revolutionaries, the option of the Last Day of the Gospel forces upon us our daily task as a fundamental imperative because only revolution can feed the hungry, house the homeless, care for the sick, bring dignity to the dispossessed, freedom to the exploited, life to the drowning, calm to the frightened, happiness to the miserable, the earth to the meek. Only revolution can recreate faith in life and in man and realize the commandment of fraternity through solidarity among peoples. This revolution, though at times necessarily violent, because some hearts are so callous, is not one of despair; it is the only way that humanity may once again hope and love.

And so we begin.⁶⁵

In Argentina the masses are Peronists because dictator-president Juan Perón, whom liberal historians in the United States branded a fascist, gave them a higher standard of living, a greater sense of participation, a deeper class consciousness than any ruler before or since. Thus, García Elorrio decided to be with (and not just 'for') the Peronists. He joined their strikes, participated in their demonstrations, worked in their unions, helped their commandos, suffered their persecution (and tortures in jail), and shared their clandestineness in moments of crisis (while still publishing *Cristianismo y Revolución*, which continues to appear not in bookstores but in the streets). In March 1967 he wrote:

64. Juan García Elorrio, personal interview, August 1967.

65. Juan García Elorrio, *Cristianismo y Revolución* (No. 1), September 1966, p. 23.

We are all in the same war; the question is on which side? There are no third ways – clerical meditations or company truces. And there should not be. This is the challenge which reaction has thrown at us. From national frustration we must now move rapidly to confrontation. The government has already announced that the escalation phase has begun. This statement hides the only reality: official violence against the rebellion of the people. We are in the thick of violence and cannot be on the sidelines...

As martyr and symbol of the demand 'liberation or death', Camilo Torres died as a guerrilla a year ago. Camilo faithfully realized his personal road to revolution. Priest and sociologist, political fighter and agitator, student and mass leader, he satisfied his thirst for justice by joining the armed struggle when he understood that the oligarchy shuts all roads and confronts the people with its ultimate weapon – violence...

Camilo represents contradiction, scandal, probing, unity, sacrifice, action, violence, and commitment. We accept him and uphold him in his totality. We do not parcel him out or divide him according to where our fear takes us. We want to be with him in our Argentine reality, fighting with the Peronist movement for the victory of the working class, for the realization of socialism in our national experience.

Under the banner of Camilo, we hereby declare total war on exploitation, on imperialism, on under-development, and on all people who betray our country from within or without. We also hereby affirm our declaration of revolutionary faith, revolutionary necessity, and revolutionary existence. We affirm a faith full of hope in the triumph of the people, a definite and permanent necessity, and an existence dictated by our Christianity.

With Camilo, we believe that revolution is the only efficient and meaningful way to achieve love for all.⁶⁶

Shortly after returning from Havana, in September 1967, García Elorrio launched the Latin-American Encounter 'Camilo Torres' to get all Christians of Latin America who

66. *Idem*, *Cristianismo y Revolución* (No. 4), March 1967, pp. 2-3.

'feel that our duty as Christians is to be revolutionaries and [who] know that the duty of all revolutionaries is to mount a revolution'⁶⁷ to work together. The organization scheduled its first general meeting on 15 February 1968 in Montevideo, and began publishing an occasional four-page newspaper, carrying documents from revolutionary or radical churchmen. In issue 1, predated 1 November 1967, García Elorrio published – for the first time in Latin America – an amazing document which has since influenced churchmen throughout the underdeveloped world. This was a manifesto, signed by 17 bishops, entitled 'Gospel and Revolution: Pastoral Letter from the Third World'.⁶⁸ Written in Recife, Brazil, under the direction of Dom Helder Câmara, the city's archbishop and one of the leading spokesmen for Christian social commitment, it denounced, in gentle but unmistakable terms, the international conspiracy of monetary imperialism as the principal cause of the Third World's ills. It condemned churchmen who tie themselves to the ruling élite, insisted that in time of crisis, especially of revolution, the pastor's place is with his flock, asked all Christians and men of good will to renounce their privileges and personal fortunes 'so that the human community may benefit from greater socialization', and reminded all that 'property exists to be placed at the service of man'. After calling on all Christians to 'embrace socialism with joy', the Pastoral Letter affirmed: 'In the subversive class-war that has long been waged by monetary interests all over the world, entire peoples have been massacred. The time has come for poor peoples ... to succeed in the defence of their right to life.'

The manifesto in no way was heretical; on the contrary, it was carefully substantiated by citations from the Bible

67. Idem, *Documentos del Encuentro* (Montevideo), 1 November 1967. The quotation is taken from Torres himself. (*Encuentro* literally means 'encounter'.)

68. See Appendix B for full text.

and such encyclicals as *Pacem in terris*, *Mater et magistra*, and especially *Populorum progressio*, the most important result of Vatican II. Proclaimed by Paul VI on 26 March 1967, this encyclical, dealing with the development both of peoples and nations, blasted inequality (Nos. 23 and 34), the profit motive as the key to industrialization (No. 26), the selfishness of rich nations (No. 49) and their so-called rule of free trade, with its disadvantages to the poor (No. 58), and racism (No. 63). Though it condemned the general use of violence (No. 30) 'save where there is manifest long-standing tyranny which would do damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country' (No. 31), *Populorum progressio* implied that such tyranny is produced not just by repressive political régimes but also by systems which keep people poor (Nos. 47 and 49) and dehumanized (No. 28). To Paul VI the main evil was clearly the 'international imperialism of money' (No. 26), and the chief duty of every Christian and every man of good will was to work for man's well-being (No. 86), for his dignity (No. 32), and for universal solidarity (No. 85).

Actually, *Populorum progressio* was not nearly as progressive as John XXIII's various edicts had been. It rejected all doctrines of social action based upon an atheistic philosophy (No. 39) and proclaimed uncharitably that 'there is no true humanism but that which is open to the Absolute' (No. 42). Nevertheless, the clear condemnation of the United States' international capitalism and the call to clergymen to commit themselves to social action opened a Pandora's box. And though Paul has repeatedly tried to soften his attack since,⁶⁹ he has been unable to close the box. Indeed,

69. 'One year ago Pope Paul VI declared, in a controversial encyclical, that the world is sick and proceeded to suggest economic and social remedies that were widely interpreted as more hostile than sympathetic to private enterprise. Two weeks ago, on the anniversary, he denied such intent ... [to] a group of three dozen American,

Father Francisco Lage Pessoa passed off Paul's reservations on the use of violence in one quick paragraph:

Manifest tyranny – what can be more manifest than the tyranny in our countries? – and long-standing – since when have we had it? – which would do great damage to fundamental personal rights – a less harsh condition than the one we actually have in our countries, where violence kills the poor every day – and dangerous harm to the common good of the country – who can ignore the pillage we suffer? Such then, according to Paul VI, are the conditions under which insurrection becomes legitimate. Let it be said in passing that these conditons reduce to zero all these reformist declarations.⁷⁰

As *Populorum progressio* and the 'Pastoral Letter from the Third World' filtered down to the lower clergy,⁷¹ more and more priests dared to voice their solidarity with revolution. In Argentina, in February 1968, a Tucumán priest, Juan Sánchez, upheld the right of striking sugar workers to use force if necessary to resist arbitrary measures taken against them, and he joined in their demonstration. He was supported by his archbishop.⁷² In Mexico, in March, a pastoral letter by all the bishops denounced the continuing social injustice inflicted upon the peasants.⁷³ In Colombia, Gabriel Diaz Duque, a worker-priest of Piedras Blancas, said in June:

European, and Latin-American businessmen who had asked formally for a "clarification" (Richard E. Mooney, *New York Times*, 21 April 1968). In Bogotá, on 23 August 1968, Paul VI praised 'men of management' for 'their perception and boldness' and condemned 'violent changes of structures' as deceitful, inefficacious, and not in accord with the Gospel, that is, not Christian' (Juan de Onis, *New York Times*, 24 August 1968).

70. Pessoa, quoted in Gheerbrant, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-30.

71. In Cuba it was printed in its entirety in the theoretical journal of young Communists, *Pensamiento Crítico*.

72. *Gramma* (English Edition), 28 January 1968; see also *New York Times*, 21 April 1968.

73. *The Economist* (Latin-American Edition), 8 August 1968.

'The dialogue with the established powers is over. Now we are in direct non-violent action. When this road is exhausted, we will have to join the guerrillas.'⁷⁴ In Brazil, in January, Bishop Jorge Marcos de Oliveira of Santo Andre declared that he 'would accept a popular armed revolution'.⁷⁵ In Rio, in April, priests protected rioting students from the police.⁷⁶ In January, Thomas Melville, the Maryknoll priest, who, with his priest brother Art, fellow priest Blase Bonpane, and the nun Marian Peter Bradford, had been deported from Guatemala for helping the guerrillas, wrote:

Having come to the conclusion that the actual state of violence, composed of malnutrition, ignorance, sickness, and hunger of the vast majority of the Guatemalan population, is the direct result of a capitalist system that makes the defenceless Indian compete against the powerful and well-armed landowner, my brother and myself decided not to be silent accomplices of the mass murder that this system generates. We began teaching the Indians that no one will defend their rights if they do not defend them themselves. If the government and oligarchy are using arms to maintain them in their portion of misery, then they have the obligation to take up arms and defend their God-given right to be men.⁷⁷

In Santiago de Chile, in June, two young slum priests, Paulino García and Francisco Guzmán, backed by nine other priests and scores of students and workers, appealed to Paul VI not to go to Bogotá for the International Eucharistic Congress in late August because they considered the Colombian hierarchy to be one of the most reactionary on the continent. Then, on 11 August, the group, totalling some 250

⁷⁴ Gabriel Diaz Duque, *Primera Plana* (Buenos Aires), 3 September 1968.

⁷⁵ Jorge Marcos de Oliveira, *National Catholic Reporter*, 31 January 1968.

⁷⁶ *New York Times*, 8 April 1968.

⁷⁷ Thomas Melville, *National Catholic Reporter*, 31 January 1968.

militant Christians, seized the cathedral and issued what is known as the Manifesto of the Young Church, which said, in part:

We denounce: violence, which is the work of the rich and the powerful; exploitation of man by the iniquitous system of profits; the international imperialism of money; the farce of a fake democracy manipulated by a minority.

We say No to the established disorder and Yes to the struggle for a new society which gives man back his dignity and in which love becomes possible.⁷⁸

In Peru, in May, 35 priests signed the Declaration of Cieneguilla, calling for total war against exploitation and oppression, 'a second war of independence'. This Declaration obtained the endorsement of Monsignor Landazuri, Archbishop of Lima and Primate of Peru.⁷⁹ In Bolivia, in April, 80 priests advocated revolution in an open letter to their bishop.⁸⁰ In Brazil, in July, 350 priests stated that 'the revolutionary option, which scandalizes so many, can well be the result of the purest act of conscience'.⁸¹

And so the numbers rose. Then, in August 1968, a formidable manifesto suddenly appeared. It was prepared for the Second Conference of the Latin-American Episcopate (CELAM), meeting in August and September in Medellín, Colombia, on the occasion of the International Eucharistic Congress. It was signed by no less than 920 Latin-American priests. Until now, the open letters, the pastoral recommendations, and the manifestoes may have repeatedly denounced the same evils – the oligarchy, the system, the American international imperialists – and may have equally often called for revolution. Some may even have asked Chris-

78. *Mensaje* (the Chilean Catholic monthly issued by Vekeman's DESAL group), September 1969, p. 43.

79. Quoted in Gheerbrant, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

80. Quoted in Gheerbrant, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

81. Quoted in Gheerbrant, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

tians to understand violence, to realize that it is the oppressors who resort to it and use it to keep the poor hungry and homeless and ignorant. An occasional document might even have gone so far as to legitimize violence in self-defence by the oppressed. But never had so many declared so categorically that the violence of the exploited was just:

... we cannot condemn an oppressed people when it finds itself obliged to use force to liberate itself; otherwise, we would commit a new injustice upon the people ... On the other hand, not opposing the violence of the oppressors is equivalent to provoking indirectly the legitimate violence of the oppressed.

These facts move us to ask, respectfully and confidently, that our clergymen united in this assembly: (1) should not, in considering the problem of violence in Latin America, under any circumstances whatsoever compare or confuse the *unjust violence* of the oppressors, who maintain this odious system, with the *just violence* of the oppressed, who find themselves forced to use it to gain their liberation: (2) denounce with absolute clarity ... the state of violence imposed by the powerful ... on the people of our region for centuries ... (3) exhort all Christians of Latin America, clearly and firmly, to work for everything that contributes to the real liberation of man ...⁸²

The final documents (140 pages) produced by the Second Conference (CELAM) watered down these declarations somewhat. In the declaration on peace,⁸³ for example, 'armed revolution' was criticized on the grounds that 'generally, it engenders new injustices'. But the same document blamed 'institutionalized violence' and the 'unquestionably unjust structures' for the region's ills and cited not only the vague 'international imperialism of money' but specifically the 'international monopolies' of American capitalism for fomenting the injustices. And 'without justice', it said, 'there can-

82. Mimeo.; also printed in *Signos de Revolución*, Lima, Comisión Episcopal de Acción Social, 1969, pp. 103-6. See Appendix C for full text.

83. *Signos de Revolución*, pp. 227-35.

not be peace'. CELAM's general declaration⁸⁴ pointed out that Latin America's economic situation, which is described accurately as constantly worsening in relation to the capitalistic countries which profit from it, demands united effort by all men of good will – and not just Christians – to bring about structural changes. 'The Christian cannot absent himself from effort, nor can he be neutral,' it said. And it recognized that, in this united effort, many atheists (by which it really meant Communists and revolutionary socialists) will play a dominant role. CELAM was prepared to accept that, the bishops declared, for 'though they do not explicitly know Christ, those who try to overcome their selfishness in order to share with their brothers are in fact responding to Him'.⁸⁵

Much of the responsibility for the increasing militancy of Latin America's bishops lies with two Brazilians from the impoverished and exploited north-east. Helder Câmara of Recife and Antonio Fragoso of Ceara both worked on the Manifesto of the 350, both signed the 'Pastoral Letter from the Third World', both have proudly supported and given refuge to members of Popular Action (AP), a revolutionary Catholic lay group fighting the military dictatorship (many of whose leaders were jailed in the summer of 1968). Both Câmara and Fragoso have been denounced as Communists by the hierarchy and by special informants to the Vatican.⁸⁶

Helder Câmara, who is well known in Europe and America as an eloquent spokesman for militant non-violence ('Personally, I would rather get killed a thousand times than kill once'⁸⁷), has been vociferously opposing the injustices of the

84. *ibid.*, pp. 193–215.

85. *ibid.*, p. 212.

86. Specifically, see 'Secret Memorandum A.G. 2585/68', dated 4 January 1969, reproduced, in part, in *Revue Interconfessionnelle de Documentation (IDOC)* (Paris, Editions du Seuil, No. 15), 1 January 1970, pp. 2–15.

87. Helder Câmara, *Informations Catholiques Internationales* (No. 312), 15 May 1968, p. 7.

Brazilian military since it seized power in April 1964. At first he saw his primary role as bringing about the *conscientização* (awakening of consciousness) in the people. But, as the military dictators increased their repressions and resorted to flagrant and wide-scale tortures, Dom Helder unleashed all his canonical cannons and whatever other weapons available in his moral arsenal directly at the enemy. As a consequence the Commandos for the Hunt of Communists (CCC), an extreme right-wing organization with direct links to the military, and the Squadron of Death (EM), an illegal organization of regular police officers who have executed hundreds of dissidents or 'enemies of public order', condemned Câmara to death. On 26 May, the CCC and the EM kidnapped Dom Helder's assistant, Antonio Henrique Pereira Noto, a 28-year-old priest who focused on young people's problems, tortured him, dragged him through the streets from behind a vehicle, hanged him, and put three bullets into his head.⁸⁸ But Helder Câmara has remained an advocate of non-violence:

88. See *Livre Noir*, Paris, Croissance des Jeunes Nations, 1969; this is a documentary dossier presented to the Vatican by various juridical and Catholic organizations. The tortures and murders have increased since, forcing scores of liberal but not radical churchmen to denounce them. The Archbishop of Ribeirao-Preto of São Paulo, Monsignor Da Cunha Vasconcellos, excommunicated his area's chief of police and the chief's assistant for 'being directly responsible for the violence inflicted upon members of the clergy of the archdiocese' (quoted in *Le Monde*, 16-17 November 1969). The Bishop of Volta-Redonda, Monsignor Colheiros, arrested on charges of subversion after he denounced publicly the government's tortures, was supported, also publicly, by twenty-nine of the thirty-two members of the central commission of the Brazilian hierarchy, including Cardinal Agnelo Rossi, Archbishop of São Paulo, and Monsignor Avelar Brandao, president of CELAM (see *Le Monde*, 19 December 1969). Luis Chávez y Gonzales, Archbishop of São Salvador, followed suit. Finally, in

I respect those who, in good conscience, have felt obligated to opt for violence, not the easy violence of salon guerrillas, but the violence of those who have proved their sincerity by sacrificing their lives. It seems to me that we should respect the memory of Camilo Torres and Che Guevara as much as that of Reverend Martin Luther King . . . Nevertheless, my personal vocation is one of a pilgrim of peace.⁸⁹

Bishop Antonio Fragoso, on the other hand, is not so unflinchingly committed to a single method of achieving justice. In September 1967 he praised 'the courage of small Cuba, and I ask God to give me the courage to imitate it and to make it possible for my people to have the courage to imitate it'.⁹⁰ Then, on 22 January 1968, in Belo-Horizonte, he gave a well-attended speech, in which he said, in part :

Christ did not come only to liberate man from sin. He came to liberate him from the consequence of sin. These consequences are in our houses, in our streets, in our cities, and inside ourselves, too. They take various forms : prostitution ; racial discrimination ; marginalization of peasants ; lack of roads, of housing, and of sanitary facilities ; concentration of economic power in the hands of a few ; hoarding of land by a few, while the great majority have no land to work ; the availability of bank credits to only

Rome, Cardinal Maurico Roy, president of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, denounced the tortures, citing the *Livre Noir*. Brazilian authorities reacted by ordering all newspapers not to carry Roy's statement (see *Le Monde*, 23 January 1970). Dom Helder then flew to Rome to publicize the findings of the Pontifical Commission (see *Le Monde*, 28 January 1970). But the military government again ordered the news media totally silent on Câmara's mission and statements (see *Le Monde*, 29 January 1970). *Time*, a few weeks later (9 February 1970), suddenly discovered the tortures ; it summarized the *Livre Noir* and reported Cardinal Roy's statement and the nine-month-old murder of Dom Helder's assistant.

89. Câmara, *op. cit.*

90. Antonio Fragoso, quoted in Gheerbrant, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

one group. Our culture in no way serves all, though all have the intelligence to profit from culture. Christ sought man's liberation, his global liberation. That was the meaning of his mission: He was the Liberator. That is why all Christians who adhere to Christ and want to follow Him are called upon, by what is most profound in our mission, to commit themselves in the struggle for the global liberation of men.⁹¹

Understandably, such appeals by Fragoso have caused considerable controversy (and won him threats from the CCC). Bishop Siguad of Diamantina, for example, reacted by stimulating a public demonstration against Fragoso by the Brazilian Society for the Defence of Tradition, Family, and Private Property (which Siguad helped organize). Head of the Brazilian clergy's Ultra-Right, Siguad had once warned that he would refuse Communion to anyone who had benefited from an agrarian reform. He now wrote to Paul VI to denounce 'the Communist subversion, hidden at times under the clerical habit', of such men as Dom Helder and Dom Antonio.⁹² But Fragoso has remained undaunted. In Bogotá for the International Eucharistic Congress, he signed in Doña Isabel Restrepo de Torres's 'golden book': 'May God give me the courage, the generosity, and the faith of Father Camilo Torres to wage the struggle for the liberation of the poor.'⁹³

Perhaps because of these bishops, undoubtedly because of Brazil's socio-economic conditions, which constantly deteriorate while just one American combine – Hanna Mining – earns about 300 million dollars from exports (roughly 17 per cent of Brazil's total export earnings),⁹⁴ the Brazilian clergy is increasingly joining the country's revolutionary van-

91. Fragoso, in Gheerbrant, p. 156.

92. Siguad, quoted in Gheerbrant, *op. cit.*, pp. 95 and 155.

93. Fragoso, in Gheerbrant, p. 155.

94. Hanna Mining, one of the links in a huge industrial empire comprising also National Steel, Consolidation Coal, and Chrysler Corporation – assembled mostly by George M. Humphrey, Eisen-

guard – and suffering the consequences. Literally scores of priests are now in jail, many of them Dominicans accused of having helped Carlos Marighela's urban guerrilla group kidnap the American ambassador.⁹⁵

Scores of nuns have been jailed, such as Mother Superior Maurina Borga da Silveira, since the summer of 1969.⁹⁶ Many have been raped by their jailers.⁹⁷ Dozens of foreign priests and nuns have been deported. Yet despite, or perhaps because of, these repressions, more Brazilian Catholics commit themselves to the liberation struggle every day. Indeed, 'we expected revolutionary movement, but never anticipated that it would build up to such intensity at the very heart of the church', said Monsignor Joseph Gremillion, secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace. 'We now find that Moscow Communists are farther to the right than many revolutionary Catholics.'⁹⁸

Postcounciliar and revolutionary ideas have also permeated the clergy of the smaller countries of the continent. In Bolivia,

hower's Secretary of the Treasury and a Goldwater backer – was on its way out of Brazil when President João Goulart was overthrown in 1964. 'The revolt,' said *Fortune* (April 1965), 'arrived like a last-minute rescue by the First Cavalry.' Today Hanna virtually controls all of Brazil's valuable mineral resources. (See also 'Brazil's Chief Miner', *Fortune*, April 1966; *New York Times*, 6 May 1966; *New York Times*, 22 December 1965; the annual reports of Hanna Mining Company and of St John D'El Ray, Ltd; 'Where Do the Humphreys Go from Here?', *Forbes*, 1 November 1965; 'Campaign Contributions of \$500 or More', *Congressional Quarterly Weekly and Special Reports*, 1963–7 inclusive; 'Humphrey Gets Back at the Helm', *Business Week*, 31 May 1958; 'M. A. Hanna Recasts Its Shape', *Business Week*, 14 October 1961; 'Ore Leader Looks Overseas to Grow', *Business Week*, 21 January 1962, and 'Consol, Hanna Selloffs Stun Street', *Business Week*, 16 October 1965).

95. Marcel Niedergang, *Le Monde, Weekly Selection*, 3 December 1969.

96. *Le Monde*, 25–6 January 1970.

97. Niedergang, *op. cit.*

98. Joseph Gremillion, quoted in *Time*, 9 February 1970.

fifty Catholic clerics, gathered in Oruro to consider the relationship of the church to the miners, said on 31 July 1969:

1. We denounce the capitalistic system existing in Bolivia, which is the cause of the underdevelopment and misery of the Bolivian people, of the miners in particular ...

3. We denounce the cycle of permanent repression in the principal mines of the country, created by the armed militia, the national guard, the criminal investigators and directors, and the police; they have transformed these mining centres into virtual concentration camps.

4. We denounce the proliferation of 'farmers' of the nationalized mines, products of political favouritism, who have become the new exploiters of the miners, launching a process of denationalization of the mines ...

6. Conscious of the demands of the committed liberating message of Christ and of our mission in this world, we totally commit ourselves to redouble our efforts, at the service of the miners of Bolivia in their struggle for liberty and human dignity.⁹⁹

In the Dominican Republic Father Francisco Sicard, stripped of his pastoral powers for 'inciting the Dominican people to disobey the Government' and for advocating 'a people's dictatorship', said in November 1969, 'Only a bullet will put an end to my work for the peasants,' and he dropped into clandestineness.¹⁰⁰ In Haiti friction between the medieval régime of 'Papa Doc' Duvalier, self-styled leader of the Third World, and priests is constant: thirty were deported during the first nine months of 1969 alone.¹⁰¹ In Paraguay the solid opposition by all twelve of the country's bishops to the Stroessner dictatorship has led to the imprisonment of various priests, the deportation of others, the closure of the Episcopal magazine *Comunidad*, and the forbidding of all charitable functions by the church (the government 'offering' to con-

99. 'Secret Memorandum ...'

100. Francisco Sicard, quoted in *Le Monde*, 12 November 1969.

101. *Le Monde*, 4 November 1969.

tinue to distribute food imported through Caritas to the 400,000, out of a population of 2,200,000, who need it to survive).¹⁰² In Ecuador the plenary session of the Episcopal Conference held in Benos-Tungurahua from 17 June to 20 June 1969, insisted that 'the priest, as a human being, has the fundamental right to organize his life in accord with the rights of all men and to participate in the solutions to the problems of the community', implying that he has not only the right to marry but also to become a guerrilla, since 'this right must be exercised according to the demands of the common good'.¹⁰³ In Panama Father Carlos Perez Herrera, who publicly praised Camilo Torres as a 'visionary' in 1966 and Che Guevara as 'the Good Samaritan' in 1967, was overwhelmingly elected a federal deputy early in 1968, despite the opposition of the apostolic nuncio, Monsignor Pinci, who waged a vitriolic campaign against the 'devils' (Christians advocating violence) in the local press. While he was planning confrontations with American authorities over the Panama Canal, Perez Herrera was arrested, shortly after a pro-American coup cancelled his office.¹⁰⁴ But he is now out of jail and is fomenting *conscientización*.

But what, in all this revolutionary fervour, has happened to the priest's traditional image as a patient, tolerant man, capable of turning the other cheek whenever slapped on the face? In seminars, diocese meetings, and clerical magazines, the debate rages: Can a man of God really advocate and, worse, can he himself resort to violence, no matter how unjust and exploitive the enemy? In a recent colloquium-in-print, Thomas Merton said no, Robert Course said sometimes, Bertrand Duclos said yes.¹⁰⁵ In *Populorum progressio*, Paul

102. *Le Monde*, 4 November 1969; also see *Time*, 9 February 1970.

103. IDOC (No. 10), 15 October 1969.

104. Gheerbrant, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-74.

105. Thomas Merton, Robert Course, and Bertrand Duclos, 'La

VI said tyranny was absolutely outrageous. In December 1967 Juan Carlos Zaffaroni, a Uruguayan priest, defined such tyranny as a situation in which the people, the majority of the dispossessed, are not in power and cannot gain it through elections. A few months later he wrote that behind every condemnation of revolutionary violence 'hides a social prejudice, a class prejudice'.¹⁰⁶ In February 1968 he joined a protest march of sugar cane cutters from the north-east of Uruguay. On 1 May they reached Montevideo, and he was interviewed on television. He said: 'From the point of view of revolution, conditions have matured in Uruguay. It is time to seize the machine gun.'¹⁰⁷ Ordered arrested, he went underground, where he still is at the time I write. He is presumably part of the urban guerrillas, who use armed violence against a government they consider a tyrannical puppet of American imperialism.

Meanwhile, from the underground, Zaffaroni gave this answer to an interviewer's question: 'Are Christianity and violence compatible?'

Philosophically, violence means the abuse of force. In this sense, I believe Christianity must condemn violence. But in common language, we use the word violence to mean any act of force. In this sense then, the Christian not only may but in many cases must use force ... He must use force, for example, to defend his rights or the rights of those close to him. In this sense, the Christian must be violent ... All persons who can use force to protect a persecuted innocent must do so. Not to do so is an indignity.¹⁰⁸

Violence des Pauvres', *Frères du Monde* (special supplement, Nos. 40-41), 1969.

106. Juan Carlos Zaffaroni, *Cristianismo y Revolución* (No. 9), September 1968, p. 31.

107. Juan Carlos Zaffaroni, quoted in *The Economist* (Latin-American Edition), 21 August 1968.

108. Juan Carlos Zaffaroni, quoted in Gheerbrant, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

Elsewhere, Zaffaroni had made it perfectly clear that to resort to violence 'is a question not of doctrinal options but of historical reality'.¹⁰⁹

The various radical priests with whom I have discussed the question of violence tend to agree.¹¹⁰ All would condemn violence for personal or group gain. All define the systems of Latin America, the neo-colonial régimes of Africa and Asia, and some of the more cruel imperializing or racist governments of the developed world as institutionalized violence. Revolutionary violence by, say, Colombians or Angolans or Filipinos or the minorities of the United States is counter-violence. Still, it is to be used only as a last resort, when all else fails. Thus, it is a pragmatic question, to be evaluated and resolved in each specific situation. Canon Houtart said :

I think the only way to deal with the problem of violence correctly is to understand that we Christians operate on two levels. First of all we believe in a utopia, a necessary utopia, as Paul Ricoeur would say. The Kingdom of God is utopia. It is not of this world. But it is necessary that we work constantly to approach it. We must constantly criticize society when it pulls away from it; we must constantly try to show the way toward it. On this level we are non-violent. Utopia is non-violent. As Christians, then, we must advocate non-violence.

But there is another level, the level of the concrete, actual situation in which we live, in which violence exists as a fact. Here if we raise the problem in terms of violence and non-violence first, we are lost. The fundamental problem is the liberation of man. This is our goal. But now we face a contradiction. To achieve this liberation is to edge closer to our utopia, but so is to respect always the personality of each man. We advocate both values. Which supersedes? There can never be a rule. It depends

109. Zaffaroni, *Cristianismo y Revolución*.

110. Miguel de Francisco, Raimondo Ozanam, Italo Bartoletti, Leo Alting von Geusau, and Gustavo Gutiérrez Merino in Rome, October 1969; François Houtart and Teodoro del Corro in Louvain, February 1970; and Laurence Bright in London, February 1970.

on each circumstance, on the concrete case, not on principle. You evaluate the costs of achieving one at the expense of the other. It often seems to me, however, that even if one opts for liberation and say, joins the guerrillas, one can, like Father Sardiñas,¹¹¹ ask not to fight.

In this way, one can give witness to the utopia toward which the liberation is meant to head; one can be a witness of the values for which the group itself fights. But the group must understand the value of the witnessing, because the great danger of using violence is that you may kill the value for which you are fighting. But again, I am not positing this as a principle. We live in ambiguity, in contradiction. In each case, you evaluate. If bearing witness to the non-violent value of the Kingdom of God destroys solidarity and works against the brotherhood which is precisely the goal toward which you use the violence, then you fight. You can also bear witness toward the utopia while fighting. It depends on the relationship you have with the men.¹¹²

After describing a hypothetical situation in which he agreed he would have to kill, I asked Houtart if he did not see it as violating his own commitment to bear witness to the utopia. 'But now you are talking of individual morals, not social morality,' he answered. Laurence Bright followed up this point firmly:

As priests (and, of course, as socialists), we deal with social morality. My own problems I deal with alone. As a priest, I am concerned with social values. As such, when it is necessary to use violence or counter-violence, to gain that which is desirable according to social morality, it is my duty to do so.¹¹³

Not a few priests all over the world today face such dilemmas, and they solve them by evaluating each case as a concrete situation, as Houtart said. Camilo faced it first. He tried

111. Sardiñas joined the Fidelista guerrillas, wore a guerrilla uniform, and worked hard for the revolution – but did not kill.

112. Houtart, interview.

113. Laurence Bright, personal interview, London, February 1970.

to use non-violent means. He was frustrated by one of the most reactionary ecclesiastical hierarchies in the world, by a press tightly controlled by the oligarchy, by an efficient repressive force, trained and financed by the United States, and by a bitterly sectarian revolutionary movement. Thus, he opted for armed struggle. Many priests admired him but thought he had acted too impulsively. They would continue to use non-violent means. Among these were Gabriel Diaz, who lived with uprooted, landless peasants in a Medellín slum and built a church (called House of the People of God) out of the mud bricks made by his flock; Vicente Mejía, who also lived and worked in a Medellín ghetto of disenfranchised workers; Oscar Vélez, who headed the city's JOC, the Catholic Workers' Youth Group; Guilermo Benjumea, who coordinated the Manizales diocese's social action programme; and Domingo Laín, a Spanish priest, who ran a *conscientización* school for workers in Bogotá and was later sent to Cartagena, where he joined workers in a strike.

They worked well, these priests. So they were repeatedly reprimanded by the hierarchy and the press. In Cali another priest, Manuel Alzate, explained that the 'worst enemies of man are not non-believers but bad Christians'. He, too, was chastised. Still another was René García of Bogotá's Florencio slum; he also struggled to get better jobs and houses for his workers. Except for support from Monsignor Gerardo Valencia Cano, Bishop of Buenaventura, none of these clerics could find highly placed ecclesiastics willing to help them obtain food or clothes or building material for their flock. Finally, with other priests, these 'rebels' got together in July 1968 in a farm called Golconda, and issued a manifesto demanding more social concern on the part of the clergy and government. They were immediately dubbed Communists.

In December 1968 the Golconda Fifty (which included Bishop Valencia) struck again with another declaration, this time calling for 'a true revolution which will produce the

overthrow of the ruling classes of our country, through whom our foreign dependence is maintained'.¹¹⁴ The consequences were swift: Mejía was arrested, Laín was deported to Spain, and the others were deprived of their functions. In April 1969, René García was invited by students to speak at the National University, the first such invitation to a priest since the time of Camilo. He said, in part:

In Latin America people are inhibited in their development because of economic, political, and cultural dependence on the United States of America. This oppressive dependence is imposed by a small governing class which uses the Constitution, the Presidency, the army, and the church for its purpose.

The Golconda priests, motivated by a Christian concern, are taking revolutionary action to reveal the true structure of Colombian society, with the hope of helping the common people to assume power. We need a serious methodology if our commitment is to be meaningful. Our commitment implies a dedication to revolutionary action and the uniting of all people who are willing to break away from the established structures. The Golconda-Buenaventura priests seek a union of those persons totally committed to the Colombian revolution, even to the point of giving their lives for it . . . Camilo was committed not to an ideology but to the situation of his people.

In 1959 Camilo returned from Louvain and joined this University. The atheism which he saw in the University was a source of concern to him. It was an atheism which manifested itself in student anarchy. Camilo began to build the church of the University, and he did it through dialogue with the atheistic students. He believed that their problem was one of faith. The solution which he saw in this, the first stage of his career, was perhaps proselytical. He also observed the attitude of the faculty and realized that any solution to the student problem had to take the professors into consideration.

114. 'Final Document' of 'El Encuentro del Grupo Sacerdotal de Golconda. Buenaventura, 9 y 13 de diciembre de 1968', December 1968, mimeo.

Camilo saw that the faculty's thinking was based entirely on positivism, present in the University from the time of Alfonso López, and he showed how a university has to develop and become humanized. Then Camilo created the faculty of sociology. His sincerity diminished the influence of positivism in the university.

It was not long before his ecclesiastical superiors removed him from the University. Camilo then helped found the Institute of Social Administration, a reformist institution. These three efforts – the struggle against atheism and positivism, the founding of the faculty of sociology, and the founding of the Institute of Social Administration – demonstrate his attitude of love and concern for others and, at the same time, his utopianism. But Camilo, who was not one to be content with mere analysis of the situation, went to work to unite all political opposition parties; however, no agreement could be reached.

Then, Camilo announced his platform. The hierarchy immediately said that it contradicted church doctrine and forbade his participation in politics. Camilo celebrated his last Mass on 27 June 1965; by abandoning his priestly functions, he rebuked the hypocrisy and the Pharisaism of the church. This also marked his break with revolutionary opportunists who wanted to take advantage of him as a priest. He broke away also from conformity to the system. In like manner, he surrendered all his privileges and offered his life for his people.

Camilo then threw himself into politics. In a short time he talked to more than two and a half million Colombians in the public plazas. Opposition leaders and revolutionary party leaders offered him political power. This he refused. When the MRL [Revolutionary Liberal Movement] offered him a candidacy, Camilo adopted the position, which the Golconda priests also take, of abstaining from elections.

Camilo adopted this anti-electoral position to avoid complicity with an established system. It would have been impossible for him to have worked out structural changes under such circumstances. Here he entered the process which is the hope of the Colombian masses ... While his ideas were being debated, Camilo began to suffer the harassment that forced him to go from the

urban to the rural areas. He joined the militant revolutionaries and became a part of that valiant group which directly opposes institutionalized violence. There, in the countryside, Camilo died, sowing with his death the seed of the Colombian revolution. We who are assembled here today proclaim commitment to the people, the seed that Camilo sowed – commitment until death to the Colombian revolution.¹¹⁵

On Saturday, 14 February 1970, a communiqué from the Army of National Liberation reported that Father Domingo Laín had managed to return to Colombia from Spain. He had joined the guerrillas. In an open letter Laín said :

I have chosen the path of armed struggle because, in view of the reactionary and oppressive violence of the established systems in Colombia and Latin America, there is no other solution but a liberating and revolutionary violence . . . I believe that, only now, my true pastoral consecration, which demands total self-sacrifice that all men may live, begins.¹¹⁶

115. René García, extemporaneous speech, the tape of which is on file with the Latin American Department of the National Council of Churches, New York.

116. Domingo Laín, quoted in *Le Monde*, 17 February 1970.

I. Social Problems in the University*

The university has always had the role of moulding the leaders of a country, as much from the scientific point of view as from the ethical. Its role is scientific because it provides the future professional with knowledge indispensable to the study and solution of the specific problems of his country and society. It is ethical in two senses: it teaches him to employ his science without jeopardizing the rights of others or trespassing on the domain of God; and it directs his scientific aptitudes more to serving God and his fellow man than to serving self.

The twofold formation is deeply rooted, not only in the principles of the revealed words of God but also in those of simple common sense. By revelation we know that the highest commandment is to love God and our fellow man. We know, too, that we defy God when we attempt to achieve an end without using the most appropriate means. Love is service, and the most effective way to serve is through science. Common sense tells us that the end which science must serve is man – the whole man. Science cannot be conceived of except as service to man and, through man, as service to God.

Moreover, an individual cannot sincerely render effective service to the common good, even if he forgoes his own interests, unless he makes an attempt to find the most apt means. To serve man is inconceivable without science and technology. Especially in our Latin-American countries, where the disparity between the development of material

* [Written in Europe in 1956; published in *Fondo Universitario Nacional*, Bogotá, Empresa Nacional de Publicaciones, 1957. – Ed.]

elements and the development of human elements is greater than elsewhere, it is even more urgent that we realize the unfulfilled potential of the human being.

Every service is by definition social, inasmuch as it involves at least two individuals. In this sense education in ethics has always had to be social, and therefore – even if it be for this reason alone – scientific education has also had to be social, since morality inevitably involves the speculative. Furthermore, scientific teaching in the universities over the years has been oriented to the needs and trends of each period. This is the only way to train leaders who can play the role required by their particular time in history.

It is axiomatic to say that social problems are the problems which cry out most urgently for solution and those which most disturb modern man. Today political, national, and international politics are oriented to social problems. The various sciences – medicine, engineering, architecture, psychology, economics – insist more and more on social relevance.

From a long lethargy of individualism, the world is awakening to the study of society. The universities, which prepare the leaders of the various countries, must capacitate them to solve the great contemporary problems. The university will betray its mission if it trains professionals without interest in man, society, and God. These concerns cannot be cultivated today without demonstrating the profound causes of the present human problems and social needs that demand prompt attention.

These problems have for a long time been under study. Nevertheless, today the field of study has been compartmentalized and specialized. Dividing the social sciences into the speculative and the positive has clarified many problems and has made possible the perfection of methods. Sociology is considered a science of positive observation, independent of social philosophy, which is a normative science. In this way

many sociological studies made by persons of differing ideologies can and should agree if they have been conducted in a **strictly scientific manner.**

This distinction does not imply that the speculative and the positive are unrelated. For programmes of action, the normative factor should coincide with reality, and reality should have been examined adequately. This adequate knowledge of reality cannot be gained without scientific study. Therefore, in addition to the doctrinal basis, every action of society must be based on the positive study of actual conditions.

In all this it is implicit that the universities cannot abstain from contemplating the problems of social research. Social problems are eminently concrete. They depend on each culture and each society. To try to instil principles without applying them to the well-examined actual conditions of the country would not be a very great contribution to the good of our country. It is necessary for professors of positive social sciences to base their courses on the concrete studies that have **been carried out.**

To concern oneself with social problems requires a minimal amount of altruism. This altruism should be founded on solid principles and nourished adequately if it is ever to be put into practice. The Christian mystique, based on love, is the most likely source of altruism, not only in the minimal degree but also in the heroic degree evident in the history of the church. Besides the human motive of Christian love, what cultivates this sentiment is the spiritual life of grace, which sustains man in his weakness and makes him both persevering and impetuous. Therefore, in a Catholic country such as ours religious background is necessary if only from the point of view of social problems. To meet this need properly, every faculty of social sciences should include a priest.

Because inclination towards the study of sociology coincides so well with Christian inclinations, the Catholic must

exercise prudence about social questions. It is necessary to know how far one can and how far one should acquiesce. Inasmuch as the positive sciences are based on research, we must inquire to what extent each study is valid, and we must try to salvage whatever is useful in a study if it is not totally valid. It is also indispensable that we see possible scientific weaknesses as well as theological weaknesses, in order to be able to defend points of view in a field open to both sides of any question.

Hence the need for university chaplains to have some notion of social questions. They will set the standards for all Catholics, who in turn should be an example to others. Furthermore, it is important that religious problems be presented to the scientist rationally and in a way that will enable him – with his own particular mentality – to understand them. Discussion of the social consequences of the gospel will satisfy both these requirements. Hence, university chaplains must be vitally concerned with the same problems as the students, and their concern should be integrated into a vibrant Christianity.

A petition is hereby addressed to the Venerable Spanish Council to request that the Council approve a proposition naming full-time priests for the spiritual guidance of university students throughout the country.

It is hereby recommended that an inter-university institute for social research be created to provide research programmes and researchers for the various faculties of social science in the country.

2. Bogotá, Pre-industrial City*

Founded as a governmental, administrative, and religious centre, the city of Bogotá did not change fundamentally until the early 1900s. Its function as a military centre was at first relatively important, not so much for the military installations that the city contained as for the role that the army played during the time that Colombia was a colony of Spain. Our purpose here is to consider the characteristics of the pre-industrial period of a city, as specified by Gideon Sjoberg,¹ and to consider to what extent these characteristics were present in this period of the socio-economic history of Bogotá prior to the present century.

Until the beginning of this century, manual production of goods was the characteristic form of manufacturing in Bogotá. In 1860 there existed one porcelain factory and one textile factory. The textile plant disappeared in 1880. A factory to refine chocolate by use of modern machinery was founded in 1877. In the same period there were also two thriving match factories. A grain mill built in Bogotá in 1878 was the first to use a steam engine in the eastern Andean region. Between 1877 and 1879 the old animal-driven mint for coining money was replaced by the steam engine. To our knowledge these were the only industries in which the machine as such was employed.²

* [Written in French in 1958 as part of a thesis presented to the Catholic University of Louvain; translated into Spanish by Torres and published in *Lecturas Adicionales*, Bogotá, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Sociología, 1961, mimeo. - Ed.]

1. Gideon Sjoberg, 'The Pre-industrial City', *American Journal of Sociology* (Vol. LX, No. 5), 1955.

2. Luis Ospina Vásquez, *Industria y Protección en Colombia, 1810-1930*, Medellín, E. S. F., 1955.

For the Exposition of 1907 two modern beer breweries, one glass factory, two porcelain factories, and three chocolate refineries were built. These factories supplied their own electricity. We can say that in this period industrial manufacturing began to have a greater upsurge than manual.

Bogotá was founded as a political centre. This function was very important in view of the markedly centralized administrative system of the Spanish. Since we won our independence from Spain, Bogotá has always been the seat of central government.

A common and typical factor of every conquest and of every Spanish colonization was religious activity. It is a curious fact that in about 1670, more than 130 years after the founding of the city, Bogotá had only 3,000 inhabitants – but eleven great churches, two religious communities for women, and five for men. In 1552 the first secondary school had been opened.

In comparison to the rest of the country, the cultural activity of Bogotá has always been substantial. In 1912 the city had nine colleges for boys and three for girls, in addition to a university composed of four major faculties: engineering, law, medicine, and fine arts. There were two theatres; four movie houses; an arena for bullfighting; four academies: language, law, geography, and poetry; two libraries; and a museum. According to the census of that year, the population rose to 121,257 inhabitants.³

Despite Bogotá's relative superiority compared with the rest of the country, teaching by the Spanish under colonial rule was very limited. Of course, the orientation of all teaching was dictated by the Spanish authorities. No doubt for reasons of religion, but even more as a political precaution, there was opposition to any idea that did not seem to conform with those of the Spanish crown. Importation of books was controlled and regulated. Only members of the upper

3. Official Census of Colombia, 1912.

classes were educated – except for religious instruction. The courses were restricted to non-scientific material (the usual vice of Spain). Near the end of the colonial period, at the close of the eighteenth century, a botanical expedition, which enjoyed ecclesiastical support, stimulated the study of the positive sciences. This expedition provided a basis for the movement towards political independence. In fact, almost all the forerunners of the Revolution worked with it.

During this period of Colombian history (that is, until the nineteenth century), the lack of statistics makes it difficult to compare the urban population with the rural. Nevertheless, the relation between the total population of the country and that of Bogotá, as shown in Table 1, will give some notion of the demography at that time.

Table 1

The Population of Bogotá

Year	Percentage of the Population of the Entire Country
1700	2.30
1905	2.30
1912	2.39
1918	2.46
1928	3.00
1938	3.48
1951	5.45

Source: *Anuario General De Estadística*, Bogotá, DANE, 1954.

From 1723 until 1801 the population of Bogotá probably increased by only 1,395 inhabitants. From 1894 to 1905 there was an increase of 4,187 inhabitants; from 1918 to 1928, an increase of 91,427. From 1938 to 1951 the increase was 318,012, that is to say, almost 100 per cent in thirteen years.

We have no statistical data about the marked difference

between social classes. Nevertheless, the books of historians and the other literature of the period reveal some aspects of Colombian social life, particularly in Bogotá.⁴

From the beginning of the colonial period, there was a marked distinction between the Indians and the Spanish. After the first sixty years, a new class arose, that of the *criollos*, consisting of the descendants of the Spanish born in America. This new class was denied the privileges of those born in Spain. For example, in administrative positions, they could not hold office, except in *cabildos*.⁵ They could never take part in the Royal Court of Appeals or aspire to the position of viceroy. This situation of inferiority was one of the *criollos'* major arguments in favour of independence.

There was no less social discrimination between the *criollos* and the Indians and even between *criollo* and *mestizo*.⁶ This situation is clearly reflected in the practice of segregation in admission to seminaries. In the religious domain, among Christians, a certain leniency must be taken for granted. Nevertheless, until the end of the eighteenth century it was prohibited to accept Indians and *mestizos* in the seminaries. The reason for this lay more in political than in social con-

4. José Manuel Groot, *Historia Ecclesiástica y Civil Nueva Granada*, Bogotá, M. Rivas y Cía., 1889; Juan Rodríguez Freile, *Conquista y Descubrimiento del Nuevo Reino de Granada*, Bogotá, Biblioteca de Cultura Popular, 1947; José Alejandro Bermúdez, *Compendio de Historia de Colombia*, 2nd ed., Bogotá, 1937; Juan Solorzano y Pereira, *Política Indiana*, Madrid, Compañía Iberoamericana de Publicaciones, no date; Basilio Vicente de Oviedo, *Cualidades y Riquezas del Nuevo Reino de Granada*, Bogotá, Imprenta Nacional, 1930, Vol. I; Climaco Calderón, *Elementos de Hacienda Pública*, 2nd ed., Bogotá, 1930, Vol. I; Ernesto Restrepo Tirado, *Documentos del Archivo de Indias*, Bogotá, Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades, no date, Vols. XIV-XV; Pedro María Juanes, *Crónicas de Bogotá*, Bogotá, Imprenta Nacional, no date.

5. [Municipal councils. - Ed.]

6. [Criollo refers to the Colombian-born Spaniards; *mestizo*, to the racially mixed. - Ed.]

siderations. The Spanish crown feared that an autochthonous clergy might lead a movement for independence.

Although this is a political consideration, it stems from an attitude of social discrimination that existed at least in the mentality of the Spanish government. They reasoned that the Indians and the *mestizos* might become aware of this situation if they were given higher education, and might not only become troublesome to the Spanish crown but also found an independence movement. The recognition of that concern on the part of the government leaders is reflected in a quite significant difference between the social position of the classes. Moreover, as is well known, for the *criollos* to be able to receive any privileges from the government, they had to present proof of their 'pure blood', free of racial mixtures.

Absence of the division of labour and lack of specialization are aspects of pre-industrial life about which we have no specific information. Industry in itself implies division of labour and specialization. However, lack of industry does not in itself imply a lack of specialization. Even in the pre-industrial period in Europe, there was a division of labour in such manufacturing as existed at that time. Evolution in South America was different. The progress of mechanization took place by importation, not by invention. It was not necessary to go through an era of specialized labour in order to conceive of a machine. There are, moreover, reasons to believe there was no complex division of labour in Bogotá, at least not until the end of the nineteenth century.

The division of labour in Bogotá is one of various factors based on the demand for products. Consequently the extremely simple life of the colonial period did not make it possible to foresee a very differentiated demand. The small number of inhabitants, less than 100,000,⁷ as well as the almost total absence of routes of communication and therefore

7. Sjöberg considers an industrial city to have 100,000 inhabitants or more. Sjöberg, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

the absence of an open market, leads us to believe that there was not a very marked demand for products.

Commerce was in the hands of individuals rather than institutions. To confirm this phenomenon in Bogotá, we have no arguments except the evidence of silence. This argument is valid when we consider that the publications it has been possible to consult, even the official ones, had a very obvious propagandistic purpose (for example, the census of 1912). These publications try to give an exceptional value to all the institutions then existing in Bogotá, even the most insignificant. Since commercial institutions are never mentioned, it is to be assumed that they indeed did not exist.

Certain facts argue against the hypothesis that commercial institutions may have existed. In addition to the meagre demand and the lack of specialization, there is the fact that the first bank – the Bank of Bogotá – was not founded until 1870. We know that banking is closely tied to and usually precedes commercial activity by institutions.

There is no evidence of workers' control of the labour market in this period. Of course, regimentation by the Spanish had given the workers little leeway to organize labour. The relations between employer and employee remained fundamentally the same as during the colonial period. Besides economic supremacy, the employer enjoyed social and political supremacy. The agricultural entrepreneur (*encomendero*) was actually – despite laws to the contrary – lord and master over the lives and pitiful belongings of the workers.

The socio-economic structure rules out any supposition that administration and public services might have required a group of highly skilled workers. There must have been a great number of workers available to fill the available jobs. Consequently, the possibilities of a union monopoly were practically nil.

The existence of fraternal lodges, *cofradías*,⁸ and unions

8. [A type of brotherhood. – Ed.]

(whose remnants we are acquainted with even today in those parts of Colombia which are still pre-industrial) may lead us to suspect that – in the production of goods and in some services, such as the religious – the labour market was controlled prior to this century. Nevertheless, we have no concrete historical data.

In the life of Bogotá during the pre-industrial period, there were the following characteristics: control of power by an educated élite; absence of social mobility; importance of family ties, with marriages arranged not by partners but by their parents; and activity of women confined exclusively to the home and to social activities. All these elements are the logical outcome of the conditions already named. It is well to stress, as Sjöberg does, the fact that they are all so closely linked that if one element disappears from the general picture, this single omission changes the meaning and importance of all the others. The same author admits the possibility that many aspects of the pre-industrial cities coincide with those of the industrialized cities.⁹

This heterogeneous situation is noteworthy, above all, in those present inhabitants of Bogotá who were born in the city and have lived many years there. They still maintain a social influence which, although diminishing, has considerable force. This influence sometimes extends to the mass of immigrants who come to the city indirectly, for example, through the formal, juridical, or administrative institutions.¹⁰ Together with the other economic and social factors, these immigrants, who actually had no opportunity to experience life in a pre-industrial society, constitute a dynamic element in the city's evolution towards a typically industrial community.

9. Sjöberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 444–5.

10. For a detailed illustration see Yves Urbain, 'Planning Régional', *La Revue Politique* (7th year, No. 4), 1957.

3. The Standard of Living in Bogotá*

It is already a cliché to speak of the poverty in certain neighbourhoods of all great modern cities and, in particular, of the cities of developing countries. Nevertheless, it is difficult to confirm in statistical terms this impression of poverty in our urban centres. Whoever refers to poverty is called a demagogue or revolutionary. And this urban poverty may well be a limited phenomenon, isolated from the socio-economic structure of a country.

For these reasons it does not seem superfluous to try to be precise about the phenomenon of poverty in the city of Bogotá. The present monograph is a chapter of a thesis I presented to the Catholic University of Louvain in 1958. It does not presume to give a complete survey of poverty in Bogotá. It only attempts to interpret the statistical sources available to us in Colombia. I will try to frame this interpretation with socio-economic explanations of the urban phenomenon in developing countries, especially in Latin America.

The lack of a take-off stage is one of the characteristics of socio-economic change in Latin America. In our culture and institutions, we depend on Europe. We Latin Americans have received, more than discovered, new economic, social, and political systems. In general we have accepted these systems whole, without any discrimination, without an awareness of our own culture, and without a process of assimilation. Consequently, Latin-American society has suffered certain specific traumas which aggravate the situations of tension and

* [Another chapter in Torres's thesis of 1958 (see Chapter 2); published in *Asociación Venezolana de Sociología, VI Congreso Latino-americano de Sociología: Memoria*, Caracas, Imprenta Nacional, 1961, Vol. II. - Ed.]

social conflict with which any induced social change must cope.

It is well known that a correlation exists between proletarianization and urbanization. Nevertheless, it is not superfluous to determine the scope of these concepts. In this study, proletarianization will be considered a process by which a large number of salaried persons lose all means of subsistence other than their labour. Therefore, proletarianization presupposes a socio-economic structure of division of labour, of concentration of capital, and of industrialization; these are elements that have coincided with the birth of the great modern cities. As a result of a density of population demanding division of labour and industrialization, many persons have to be employed in the service occupations. Hence, although industrialization, a phenomenon more economic than social, differs from urbanization, a phenomenon more social than economic, the two generally parallel each other.

Proletarianization has been partially slowed down in the industrialized countries. The need to concentrate capital by reducing salaries has had to stop because of various factors: among the economic factors, diminishing returns on capital; among the social factors, an awakened social awareness on the part of the proletariat; among the legal factors, social legislation; among the institutional factors, the existence of unions, parity commissions, arbitration, and mediation; among the political factors, the birth of economic democracy. On the other hand, in the industrialized countries, the increased productivity of work, because of mechanization, automation, and the greater professional qualifications of the workers, has considerably increased the workers' incomes.

We know that the increase of actual salaries favours savings, if at the same time more indirect consumer needs are created. This has occurred in countries already industrialized. Furthermore, the possession of private property in an industrial society does not constitute the only element of prestige

and security. New social institutions can guarantee this prestige and security independently of the possession of private property. This we see as much in socialistic countries as in capitalistic countries.

All these factors and many others indicate a slowing down of proletarianization in industrial countries. On the contrary, in developing countries proletarianization is increasing, since industrialization and capital formation are just beginning. The productivity of work is still very low in comparison to that of industrialized countries. Therefore, actual salaries and savings decrease instead of increase.

Given the value system here, which is still feudal, and the shortage of other institutions in our countries – even in the cities – private property constitutes the principal element of prestige and security. Since private property is a way of saving, the lack of savings increases proletarianization by dispossessing the worker.

Insamuch as the birth rate of the urban population is lower than that of the rural population, the demographic predominance of the city over the rural areas can be explained only by the emigration from the latter to the former. Among the factors that the demographers and sociologists note in every society as causes of expulsion from the rural areas and attraction to the city,¹ we want to emphasize those that take on special importance in Latin America.

The urban mirage that attracts the peasants is proportionate to the contrast between the city and the rural areas, whenever the peasants are aware of that contrast. In Latin America, because there is no process of assimilation of the elements of an industrial society, the contrasts between the rural milieu and the urban are great. Within an area only a few kilometres wide we can find elements of pre-Spanish culture and elements of the most highly advanced civilizations of our time.

1. See E. Bugel, *Urban Sociology*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1955, pp. 211–62.

The economic, social, and cultural differences between city and country are immensely greater than in the developed countries.

In communications, the differences are not so great. Rather than raise the standard of living in the country or provide all kinds of services, it is easier to extend radio, television, movies, and press into the rural areas. Therefore, immigration to the city is accelerated not only because the contrast between city and rural area is greater but also because it becomes easier for the rural inhabitants to know of that contrast.

The peasants are driven from the rural areas by the low standard of living there. We know that the rural areas of underdeveloped countries have the highest birth rates in the world. Agrarian reform in these countries and particularly in Latin-American countries has been the foremost concern. All this is a clear sign of the abnormalities of the economic structure in our rural areas; the low standard of living of the rural population is one result. The peasants find themselves obliged to look for new sources of income in the urban areas. The lack of services, of amusements, and of entertainment, together with the poor housing and general barrenness of rural life, makes our rural inhabitants, more than those of industrialized countries, try to migrate.

In some countries – in Colombia, for example – there is the phenomenon of *la violencia*,² especially in the rural areas. As in feudal times, the peasants go to the cities for protection.

In European countries industrialization was followed by a great flourishing of artisans. This industrialization succeeded in preparing skilled workers for the industrial revolution. In Latin America there were no such thriving manual crafts.

2. ['The violence', as Colombians refer to the rural massacres that have taken place in the countryside since the popular leader Jorge Elíecer Gaitán was assassinated by the Colombian oligarchy in 1948, has cost almost half a million lives so far. – Ed.]

There were no appreciable urban concentrations of artisans. There was no unskilled labour shortage to oblige the society to mechanize.

Industry in Latin America has always been short of skilled labour. Rural immigrants arrive, swelling the ranks of the unskilled workers, whose overflow creates both the obvious and the partially camouflaged unemployment typical of our urban centres. This phenomenon of unemployment is still worse in those cities which are predominantly administrative, commercial, and cultural – in a word, in those cities specialized in the third sector of production, which is services of all kinds.

The service occupations can, on occasion, attract the peasants to a certain extent. On the other hand, we know that in our countries the development of the third sector is disproportionate to that of the second sector, that is, manufacturing. Therefore, the masses of rural immigrants find even more unfavourable conditions in a city that is predominantly a service centre. They cannot be absorbed by industry inasmuch as they are not skilled. Much less can they be absorbed into the ranks of the common labourers. In the personal services – such as bootblacking, domestic service, and carrying baggage, all of which are a kind of unemployment in disguise – they find occupational refuge.

This seems to be the case in Bogotá. Established as a religious, cultural, administrative, and military centre, Bogotá attracted large numbers of rural immigrants as soon as possibilities of contact between the city and the rural areas enabled the city to induce social change in the rural areas.

Compared to other cities, Bogotá is a city with many more people in the tertiary occupations than in the secondary. Industry cannot absorb all the unskilled workers who come to the city. Eventually they increase consumption, it is true. But they do not acquire habits of industrial consumption until they are assimilated into the city.

The present monograph attempts to analyse the standard of living of workers and employees of Bogotá. It will take into account average consumption, salaries, and food. Through statistical data, especially those made available by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia, we will try to show that the poverty of the working population of Bogotá is authentic and objective and that true proletarianization is taking place in this city.

Of course, this statistical essay, if it gives a glimpse of actual conditions, is more valuable as a working hypothesis that should be confirmed by direct research than as a contribution to profound knowledge of the social problems of the city.

It would have been desirable to consider all social aspects of the city. Unfortunately, the existing statistical data treat only certain aspects of the material standard of living. Therefore this monograph is not entitled 'Social Conditions of Bogotá'. In our opinion, the social condition of a community is much more complex than its merely material level of life could indicate. Nevertheless, there is a very close interdependence between economic and social factors. The economic conditions can clarify the social relations of a community. By explaining the nature of these economic relations, the social condition is better understood.

This is also not an attempt to define 'social class'. Literature on that problem is abundant.³

3. T. H. Marshall, ed., *Class Conflict and Social Stratification*, London, 1938; T. H. Marshall, 'Social Class - A Preliminary Analysis', *Sociological Review* (Vol. XXVI), 1934, pp. 55-6; P. Mombert, 'Class', *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. III; T. Parsons, 'Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification', *American Journal of Sociology* (Vol. LXV), 1940, pp. 841-62; H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills (trans. and eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, pp. 180-90; Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. T. Parsons and A. M. Hendersons, pp. 424-9; Maclver, *Society*, London, Macmillan, 1955, pp. 348-83.

All authors agree that economic level and employment influence social stratification. We should be guided by the statistical data according to which the working class is formed by all those whose work is predominantly a manual activity. The middle class is formed by those whose work is predominantly a mental activity. Non-industrial workers are not considered part of the working class. In this context, 'industrial' means the creation of products, including crafts. A more adequate class division would be one of 'industrial urban workers' and 'employees'.

The terminology of the Colombian statistician will be utilized. It seems to be more incomplete than unrealistic, since the middle class is represented not only by the employees and the working class is represented not only by the industrial workers of the city.

Nevertheless, if one considers the social status of the two groups to be the criterion of stratification, as MacIver does, these groups must be proved to belong to two different social classes. We use MacIver's definition of 'social status': 'Social status is the position that gives the one who holds it a degree of respect, prestige or influence, without consideration of his personal qualities or service to society.'⁴

We believe that the social status of the city workers differs from that of the employees. This opinion is confirmed by the works of Father Lebret and those of Mr Jacob Perlman of the Foreign Aid Mission. The salaries of the employees are, at a glance, higher than those of the workers.

A detailed survey would be necessary to determine the degree of distinction between the two groups and the degree of homogeneity within each group. For lack of this survey we will, with the above reservations, use the terms 'middle class' and 'working class' as equivalent to 'employees' and 'urban workers', respectively.

4. MacIver, *op. cit.*

What is involved in the standard of living is an economic standard. Unfortunately, there are no data available on the savings of these two social classes. The standard of living therefore will indicate only the expenses and not the economic possibilities of these two classes. The external social reality will be described on the basis of statistical data, average consumption, cost of living, and salaries. We add a paragraph of nutrition, which seems necessary because, among other reasons, the other factors emphasize nutrition.

The indexes of the cost of living have been based on consumer products, essential to both the working class and the middle class. To establish a group of basic products, the National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia employed the survey system. The survey system has been different for the two series of prices in the cost of living.

The first series of cost-of-living indexes covers the working class from 1937 to 1954 (for Medellín, only from 1940) and covers the middle class from 1946 to 1954. The indexes for the working class, with the exception of those covering the cities of Bogotá and Medellín, were elaborated only from 1940 on. Only Bogotá and Medellín are to be considered. As for indexes on the middle class, the series includes only Bogotá.

The basic products were determined by establishing the typical consumption of an average family. This average family was selected on the basis of demographic, economic, health, and nutritional factors, through a sampling system.

Cost-of-living indexes were established on the basis of the consumption patterns of this average family. This procedure reveals not only price trends but also the expenditures of both the middle class and the working class. The data on expenditures are a most significant guide to social stratification. The data on price trends dynamically complement this information on stratification. Expenditures of the average

working-class family and the average middle-class family are established. The price index indicates the trends or expected trends in expenditures of these families.

In 1953, the Colombian Government commissioned Carl Robert Bjorkenheim, a specialist from the International Labor Organization (ILO), to establish indexes of the cost of living in seven cities of the nation: Bogotá, Barranquilla, Medellín, Cali, Bucaramanga, Manizales, and Pasto. These cities constitute a sampling of the different socio-economic regions of the country, regions chosen on the basis of population density, average income, climate, social conditions, and geographical location.⁵ For this reason, the average index of these cities has been called a national index.

The ground rules for carrying out the survey were quite explicit.⁶ A random sampling was used; it was not stratified but was weighted by the relative importance of the sample. Through this survey the composition and the consumption patterns of the average working-class and middle-class family were determined. Prices in the cities included in the study were established in the retail market. This series thus differs in various ways from the first. The DANE has published the data and the formulas for correlating the two series.⁷ It is preferable not to make this correlation in view of the change in the components of certain categories, particularly housing. The second series, considered alone, does not suffice to show a trend; it covers only three years (1955, 1956, and 1957). An attempt has been made to make up for this shortcoming by taking into account the trends of the previous series and the differences between the two series.

5. See *Boletín Mensual de Estadística* (No. 62, April 1956, p. 64).

6. *Anales de Economía y Estadística* (No. 60, Bogotá, DANE). [DANE stands for Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística. — Ed.]

7. *Boletín Mensual de Estadística* (Nos. 61 and 62), March and April 1956.

The difference in design and the insufficient data in the first series made it impossible to work out patterns on the same basis for Bogotá and for Medellín. Therefore, we looked for a procedure to make approximations that would establish a relationship reasonably close to reality. All the indexes of the first series were reduced to the basis of 1940, the year in which we find the first figures on Bogotá's middle class. The figures of the series on Bogotá's working class (basis of 1937) could be deduced, since the data necessary for establishing the mathematical correlation were available. The series on the working class of Medellín (basis of 1938), however, gave data only for the total, not for each category. Since trends were similar in the two cities, all the Medellín figures after 1940 were weighted by the difference between the Bogotá indexes of 1938 and 1940. The approximation was proved correct by the total index of Medellín prices, for which we had exact data and could make the corresponding mathematical reduction.

All the cost-of-living indexes of the first series were weighted by the real-wage indexes of Bogotá in order to offset the effect of devaluation of Colombian currency in 1940.

Average expenditures were studied on the basis of 1940, the last year on which the DANE publications gave information.⁸ The cost-of-living indexes considered in the following section give an idea of the trends. Expenditures of the working class of Bogotá were taken as the point of reference; they are compared first with the expenditures of the middle class of that same city (see Table 1) and then with the expenditures of the working class of Medellín, Bucaramanga, and Barranquilla (see Table 2).

These tables point up two things clearly: the great difference between the expenditures of the working class and of the middle class in Bogotá and the low level of expenditures by Bogotá's working class in comparison with the ex-

8. *Anuario General de Estadística*, Bogotá, DANE, 1954.

Table 1

Expenditures of the Working Class of Bogotá Given as a Percentage of the Expenditures of the Middle Class of Bogotá
(Average Monthly Expenditures per Family)

Article	Percentage
Food (including cigarettes and alcoholic beverages)	31.0
Housing	11.9
Fuel	45.8
Clothing	10.8
Miscellaneous	5.3
Total	20.9

Source: *Anuario General de Estadística*, Bogotá, DANE, 1954.

Table 2

Expenditures of the Working Class of Medellín, Bucaramanga, and Barranquilla, Given as a Percentage of the Expenditures of the Working Class of Bogotá
(Average Monthly Expenditures per Family)

Article	Medellín	Bucaramanga	Barranquilla	Sum
Food (including cigarettes and alcoholic beverages)	155.9	128.4	189.8	474.1
Housing	117.7	58.7	126.3	302.7
Fuel	118.5	100.8	170.6	389.9
Clothing	225.8	89.9	263.3	579.0
Miscellaneous	116.7	64.4	352.6	533.7
Total	149.6	112.1	193.5	455.2

Source: *Anuario General de Estadística*, Bogotá, DANE, 1954.

penditures of the working class in the other three cities, especially in food and clothing.

The three areas in which the difference is most outstanding are miscellaneous, clothing, and housing. Miscellaneous expenses comprise, in particular, recreation and services. There is nothing surprising about the higher expenditures of the

middle class on services. The demand for services is known to increase in the middle class proportionally to the increase of income. The absence of expenditures on recreation by the working class is explained by the low level of other, more urgent categories such as food, clothing, and housing.

It would be interesting, in evaluating miscellaneous expenses, to establish a correlation between the consumption of alcoholic beverages and the absence of recreation. This correlation might provide a partial basis for explaining the consumption of alcohol by the working class, showing that recreation is a human need that must be satisfied one way or another.

Expenditures in clothing and housing, two very important elements in human life, show clearly enough the lower economic level of the working class.

In the three cities taken as a whole, expenditures surpass those of Bogotá first of all in clothing (sum of the percentages: 579.0) and then in food (sum of the percentages: 474.1). Although the sum percentage of clothing purchases is higher than that of food, Bogotá lags behind all three cities in food expenditures, whereas its clothing expenditures are higher than Bucaramanga's. The category in which Bogotá lags least behind is housing.

All the price index curves are rising. Let us examine the difference between the two series and among the different categories of consumption. For the first period (1940-54), we have figures only for Bogotá (middle class and working class). For the second period (1955-7), we have figures for the middle class and working class of Bogotá, Barranquilla, Medellín, Cali, Bucaramanga, Manizales, and Pasto.

In view of the similarity of trends in these cities and the fact that the comparisons have been made with the cities of Medellín, Cali, and Barranquilla (and Bucaramanga, in clothing) only five cities have been analysed. More exactly, we are speaking of the average index of seven cities, which

gives a national index. The cities studied are Bogotá, Barranquilla, Medellín, Cali, and Pasto. The analysis will pertain exclusively to the first period (1950-54); the second will be taken into account only when there is an appreciable difference.

The curves of Graphs⁹ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 can be divided into three categories: (1) curves that coincide more or less (food and total expenditures); (2) curves that are parallel (housing and clothing); (3) curves that go in different directions (fuel and miscellaneous).

We can make the following observations about these three categories in relation to the curve of the working class. In the first category, food and total expenditures, the curve of Medellín is somewhat higher than the two of Bogotá. In addition, the curve of the middle class is more stable and lower in clothing.

In the second category, housing and clothing, the curve of Medellín is higher; it is also more stable in clothing. The curve of the middle class is more stable; it is also higher in housing, but lower in clothing than the other two curves.

In the third category, fuel and miscellaneous, the curve of Medellín is higher in fuel (except for recent trends) and lower in miscellaneous expenditures (from 1948 on). The curve of the middle class is more stable and lower in fuel (until 1953).

In general, the curve of the working class of Bogotá seems lower than the curve of Medellín and less stable than the curve of the middle class.

In the second period, the category of housing was expanded. In the first period it included only rent and the cost of water and electricity. In the second period it also included fuel and household articles (furniture, kitchen equipment, soap, and other articles). This expansion reversed the position of the curve of the Medellín working class in comparison

9. [The graphs did not accompany the monograph. - Ed.]

with that of the Bogotá (see Graphs 7 and 8). The highest curve for housing was registered, in the latter city, for the working class.

Other changes can be observed. Miscellaneous expenditures altered so much that it is difficult to compare them with the figures of the first period. Alcoholic beverages and cigarettes, which had been considered food, were added to the miscellaneous expenditures, while household articles that had come under the latter category were added to housing, as has just been explained.

In the second period, the total index, or national index, coincided in trend with the Bogotá curves. The curves of the working class were higher than those of the middle class, not only in Bogotá but also in the other cities studied. Finally, little stability was seen, since the period studied was quite short. In conclusion, during the second period, the highest curves are those of the working class and the highest housing curve is that of the Bogotá working class.

The first series lets us see trends best; the prices used in it were real, obtained in the retail market. We must be much more prudent when comparing the curves, particularly those of the two different cities and of different categories. The criteria for the study were not so well established, and evidently this affected the relationships. For this reason, the Colombian government had a new study made, with ILO technical assistance, to establish a new series of indexes. These trends, which in a general way may be considered real, show greater price instability for the working class than for the middle class of Bogotá. The criteria for division into classes were the same.

The second series lets us compare better the different cities as well as the different categories, for both the working class and the middle class. The price curve is higher for the working class than for the middle class in all categories and in all cities. This confirms the findings of the first series in its total

(average) index and in clothing. This new series does not give such clear proof in the other categories, and although it may be contradicted by rental expenditures in the first series, it must be used in view of the technical resources employed in the study, as mentioned previously.

There are data only on the industrial wages in Bogotá and Zone A. This zone includes the departments of Cundinamarca (including Bogotá), Boyaca, North Santander, and Santander. Straight comparisons are not adequate, since the data for Bogotá are included in both listings. This fact is taken into account in analysing the data.

Even though Bogotá wages are included in the figures for earnings in Zone A, the curve for the latter is somewhat higher (see Graphs 9 and 10). This small difference is significant in view of the weight of Bogotá wages. In general, the curves for earnings are higher than the curves for the cost-of-living indexes.

It is even more difficult to compare real wages. Calculations of real wages have been made on two bases: in relation to the general cost of living for the working class (which includes the price indexes for food, rent, clothing, fuel, and miscellaneous), according to the first series of indexes (above); and in relation to retail food prices. Unfortunately, these figures (cost of living and food prices) are available only for Bogotá (see Table 3). Therefore, only a slight difference is

Table 3

Real Wages as a Percentage of the Cost of Living

Year	Bogotá	Zone A
1943	111.8	110.0
1954	102.7	95.0

Source: *Anuario General de Estadística*, Bogotá, DANE.

seen between the curves for Bogotá and Zone A. The indexes for Zone A are consistently somewhat higher; but since the

other data are identical to those of Bogotá, this difference is no more significant than that of the curve for earnings.

Even so, it should be recalled that the real-wage indexes of both Bogotá and Zone A not only did not rise, but they fell. This phenomenon is seen even better when real wages are compared with food prices (see Table 4). The level of food

Table 4

Real Wages Compared to Food Prices

Year	Bogotá	Zone A
1943	96.6	107.2
1954	72.2	75.0

Source: *Anuario General de Estadística*, Bogotá, DANE.

consumption, one of man's essential needs, is an excellent index for determining the standard of living of a class, particularly if that level is inadequate.

The preceding sections provide some revealing data on the food expenditures of the working class, especially in Bogotá. The average food expenditures of the Bogotá working class are only 31 per cent of the food expenditures of the middle class. Compared with the other cities, the food expenditures of Bogotá's working class are the lowest (see Table 2). Compared with other expenditures, food expenditures are the lowest in both Bogotá and the other cities.

The indexes show that food prices are higher for the working class than for the middle class (see Graphs 7 and 8). They also show that real wages in Bogotá and in Zone A are lower when calculated in relationship to food prices than when calculated in relationship to the general cost of living.

The food index for the working class is thus a most significant factor. Fortunately, Miss Lírca Barreto, a specialist belonging to the FAO mission, was commissioned by the Colombian government to conduct a study on the food con-

sumption of the average working-class and white-collar family in seven cities of the nation.¹⁰ This study was based on the previously mentioned survey, made of these cities with ILO assistance, to determine cost-of-living indexes. Thanks to this study, we can explore the category of food more deeply. We will do so by comparing the nutritional value of the food consumed by the working class (principally of Bogotá) with that of the food consumed by the middle class (clerks).

As a prologue, I would like to present the following information on nutrition:

Food has three functions: to heat the body; to provide a reserve; and to supply matter for the creation of cells, that is, for the body's growth. All foods supply energy, that is, they supply calories. However, carbohydrates and proteins do not supply them to the same extent. Comparisons are scarcely adequate, for while fats are the principal source of reserve, carbohydrates supply energy only.

Proteins are the most important of all foodstuffs. They not only provide building blocks for the creation of cells but also maintain the organic balance of water. Without proteins there cannot be good nutrition.

Proteins are composed of amino acids, which are required by the human body. These acids are not found in vegetable protein but only in animal protein, in milk, meat, eggs, etc. Soybeans, however, may be used as a substitute for these foodstuffs. Certain mixtures of vegetables may also take the place of these amino acids.¹¹

Proteins are also very important from the point of view of intellectual activity.

The nutritional value of the diet in the cities studied by

10. *Lírica Barreto, Estimación del Valor Nutritivo de la Alimentación Consumida por la Familia Media de Obreros y Empleados de Siete Ciudades Colombianas, Bogotá, FAO Mission, 1955, MS.* [FAO is the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. - Ed.]

11. Contributed as a special collaboration for this article by Calixto Torres Umaña.

the FAO mission was determined according to recommendations set down for each food element by the United States National Research Council (see Graph 11). According to this study, the working class is undernourished in all seven cities. All the food elements studied were insufficient, except two: thiamine (insufficient only in Pasto) and niacin (insufficient only in Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, and Cali).

The diet of the middle class in these seven cities seems to be unbalanced rather than insufficient. If the elements in which the middle-class diet is adequate turn out (as is the case) to be the same as those in which the working-class diet is deficient, certain hypotheses could be formulated to explain this deficiency.

The middle-class diet is sufficient in the three following elements: calories (except in Pasto); proteins (except in Manizales, Medellín, and Pasto), with a good proportion of animal proteins; iron. These elements are not sufficient in the working-class diet. To discover the reasons for the insufficiency, it is necessary to determine which foods contain these elements and to see why they are lacking in the working-class diet and sufficient in the middle-class diet.

Food containing Calories, Proteins, and Iron

CALORIES: butter, other fats, meat, string beans, and legumes.

PROTEINS: meat, eggs, milk, and milk products.

IRON: cereals, tubers, and bananas.

In view of the importance of proteins in the diet, we will explore the reasons for the absence or insufficiency of protein-containing foods, in particular, of meat and milk. These foods, which were studied by Miss Barreto,¹² are among the most important foods that contain animal proteins, and they are representative.

According to the FAO study, which uses the standards adopted by the National Institute of Nutrition of Colombia,

12. Barreto, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-8, Charts 37, 38.

milk and meat consumption by both the working class and the middle class is clearly inadequate in the cities studied. There is, however, an enormous difference between the consumption of these products by the working class and by the middle class. A table of comparisons follows (Table 5).

Table 5

Percentage of Daily Milk and Meat Consumption per Member of the Working-Class Family as Compared with Consumption per Member of the Middle-Class Family (1954)

City	Milk	Meat	Total
Barranquilla	45.0	49.0	94.0
Bogotá	31.0	38.0	69.0
Bucaramanga	29.0	44.6	73.6
Cali	22.0	54.0	76.0
Manizales	32.0	51.4	83.4
Medellín	31.0	62.2	93.2
Pasto	36.0	37.2	73.2

Source: Lírca Barreto, *Estimación del Valor Nutritivo . . .*, Bogotá, FAO Mission, 1955, MS.

A comparison of prices of meat and milk with the family budget allowance for food would show the influence of economic factors on this dietary inadequacy. We will examine, for both the middle class and the working class, the importance of the cost of meat and milk to the family budget allowance for food.

The survey carried out with ILO technical assistance to establish cost-of-living indexes gives the average family composition in the seven cities. A working-class family consisted of seven members: a father; a mother; and five children of one, three, five, seven, and fourteen years of age. A middle-class family comprised six members: a father; a mother; three children of one, five, and nine years of age; and a domestic servant.

Taking into consideration the ages of the children and the number of persons in each kind of family, we can estimate the minimum daily consumption of milk and meat per family as two litres of milk and 500 grammes of meat (the recommendation of the National Institute of Nutrition is 121 grammes per person). Therefore, the average price in 1953 (in Colombian pesos) would be \$200 a year for milk and \$431 a year for meat.¹³

We know that the average food expenditures in 1953 (in Colombian pesos) were \$1,295 for the working-class family and \$4,110 for the middle-class family. Consequently, hypothetical expenditures for milk and meat considered as a percentage of the total family budget for food would yield the results shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Hypothetical Expenditures for Milk and Meat as a Percentage of Total Family Food Budget

Food	Working-Class Family	Middle-Class Family
Milk	15.40	6.30
Meat	33.36	10.50
Total	48.76	16.80

According to these figures, the working-class family would have to spend half its food budget (48.76 per cent) to have adequate milk and meat consumption. Clearly, economic factors are very important in the underconsumption of milk and meat by the working class. In this situation, educational factors are not dominant. In the middle class, with 16.80

13. [These figures are based on the following calculations: for milk, $50 \times 275 \text{ per litre} \times 2 = 0.55 \times 365 = \200 a year; for meat, $2.36 \text{ per 1,000 grammes} \times \frac{1}{2} = \$1.18 \times 365 = \$431$ a year. (These calculations appeared in the next text in the original.) Note that \$1 (US) = \$15 (Colombia). - Ed.]

per cent of the total food budget necessary for adequate milk and meat consumption, educational factors may play a great, perhaps the major, role. Miss Barreto also concludes that economic factors have an important effect on the place of milk and meat in the working-class diet.¹⁴

The position of Bogotá from the point of view of the diet of the working class can be compared with other cities.

Bogotá is in last place (except for the city of Pasto) in consumption of proteins and calories by the working class (see Graph 11), with consumptions of 40 per cent and 31 per cent respectively.¹⁵ Of the proteins only 37 per cent are of animal origin. (Bogotá is in last place, after Pasto). In view of the importance of these elements for maintenance of the body as well as for physical and intellectual work, the Bogotá diet is extremely inadequate. Bogotá has a higher consumption of calcium, riboflavin, and vitamin A. However, consumption of these elements falls short of the recommendations.

In comparison with the middle class, Bogotá shows the greatest difference between meat and milk consumption by the two classes. (The figure for the working class is 69 per cent of that of the middle class, if meat and milk are considered together.) The difference between the percentages corresponding to the two classes has been figured, according to United States National Research Council recommendations, for various food elements. If we look at the total of this difference between the two classes, Bogotá has the highest figure, followed by Pasto and Cali (360.5, 434, and 413 respectively). If we look at the differences between the food elements taken separately, Bogotá comes out with a greater difference than the other cities in four items: calories, vitamin A, niacin, and ascorbic acid.

If we again take the Bogotá classifications as a whole, comparing the difference between the middle class and the work-

14. Barreto, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

15. Barreto, *op. cit.*, p. 60, Chart 36.

ing class there to other cities, we see that only Bogotá shows such a great difference between the two classes (see Tables 7 and 8).

Table 7

Items of Diet	Place of Bogotá in the Difference between Classes
Milk and meat	First place
Sum of the elements	Third place
Number of elements in which the difference is higher than in the other cities	First place

Three main facts emerge from the foregoing analysis of the standard of living in Bogotá compared with that in other cities. First, the working class in general has a very low standard of living. Second, the conditions of the working class of Bogotá are particularly bad. Third, there is a marked difference between the standard of living of the working class and of the middle class, especially in Bogotá.

The phenomenon of a low standard of living for the working class is explained, in general, by the shortcomings of the socio-economic structure of these countries, particularly by the absence of basic investments, of demand, of skilled labour, of trade unions, and of similar institutions.¹⁶

We cannot now go into this problem, which is so crucial for all underdeveloped countries; this would demand a complete study. This paper has concentrated on the city of Bogotá, and it is limited to seeking a hypothesis explaining the particular features of Bogotá in this respect.

16. See P. T. Baur and B. S. Yamey, *The Economics of Underdeveloped Countries*, Cambridge University Press, 1957; Ragnar Nurkse, *Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1955; Alfred Bonné, *Studies in Economic Development*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957; Gustavo Pérez, *Le Niveau de Vie des Paysans Colombiens: Problèmes et Interpretation*, Louvain, 1958, MS.

Table 8 Difference in the Percentage (According to the Recommendations) of the Dietary Elements of the Working Class and the Middle Class

Elements:	Pasto	Barranquilla	Bogotá	Bucaramanga	Cali	Manizales	Medellín
Calories	36	34	45	42	29	12	19
Proteins	42	39	24	25	43	31	27
Calcium	85	25	6	30	43	12	35
Iron	57	42	30	44	41	37	102
Vitamin A	13	20	31	27	27	14	25
Thiamine	80	62	57	68	96	74	25
Riboflavin	33	31	40	36	47	16	35
Niacin	55	42	59.5	34	40	38.8	20
Ascorbic acid	33	38	68	63	47	35	46
Vitamin D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	434	333	360.5	369	413	269.8	334
Percentage of animal proteins per total proteins	5	5	10	5	12	3	12
Elements in which the middle-class diet is adequate:							
Calories	36	34	45	42	29	12	19
Proteins	42	39	24	25	43	31	27
Subtotal	78	73	69	67	72	43	46
Iron	57	42	30	44	41	37	102
Total	135	115	99	111	113	80	148

Source: Lirica Barreto, Estimación del Valor Nutritivo ..., Bogotá,

FAO Mission, 1955, MS.

The data given above allow us to summarize these conditions as follows: (1) low average expenditures; (2) low real wages, low earnings, and high cost of living; (3) undernourishment. Several hypotheses may be advanced to explain this: (1) lack of financial profit in Bogotá industries, whose imbalance is made up by keeping wages low; (2) too great an influx of unskilled labour; (3) too rapid a growth of population, which prevents wage adjustments.

There is no information available on the profitability of Bogotá's industries; however, we may consider the hypothesis that it is not high. Inasmuch as Bogotá is not a typical industrial city, the costs of industrial production there may be too high for the volume of demand. Since the wage policies of the government and trade unions are not favourable to the workers, the profits lost are made up at the expense of wages.

If Bogotá industry depends on those residing in the city, local demand has a great effect on it. And demand is in direct proportion to the income of the population. Moreover, the influx of persons from rural areas is, in general, an influx of unskilled persons who are not qualified for urban, industrial work. They swell the labour pool and force wages down. Much time is required for them to become skilled workers. Their income is quite low; and demand does not increase as wages go down. There is also an influential social factor: the rural population does not develop needs for industrial products overnight. The newcomers, for example, would mend clothing before buying replacements – unlike long-term city-dwellers – and they make less use of canned goods than do people accustomed to city life.

This is true not only for immediate consumer goods such as food and clothing but also for housing. The immigrants from the countryside live in such primitive housing that one cannot speak of an increase in the demand for building materials just because of the influx. These people live in shacks of dirt walls, the rest pieced together from scraps of

building materials. Even the demand for urban public services is much lower among the immigrants than among those who live under the same conditions but who are more accustomed to using those services.¹⁷

In conclusion, it may be said that the influx of unskilled labour makes wages fall but does not increase the demand for industrial products. It seems that the influx is greater in Bogotá than in the other cities studied.

The city of Bogotá is growing less than Cali, Barranquilla, and Medellín, at least according to the 1951 census. It is necessary to consider the relationship between population growth and the socio-economic structure of each city. It is almost certain that the greatest relative growth of population is taking place in Bogotá.

To see the relationship to the structure of the city, it is necessary to examine construction. If there is a greater proportional increase of construction in Bogotá than in other cities, it is because there is a greater demand, indicating that the population's needs have not been met by the socio-economic structure.

The three hypotheses offered above may all be true. Each by itself may be insufficient to explain these phenomena. There may also be other explanations that elude us. Nevertheless, it seems to me that, though they are in the realm of conjecture, the hypotheses fit the situation of Bogotá very well indeed.

The very marked difference between the classes is a characteristic closely linked to the structure of the underdeveloped countries. Upon examination of the hypotheses stated to explain the low standard of living of the working class, we will see that only the first (low profits of industry) can have a determining influence over the middle class, above all if this class is limited exclusively to the employees. The employees

17. [The apparent contradictions in this paragraph and the following three are in the original. - Ed.]

can have a certain skill that is not found, in general, among the rural immigrants: they can perform work in which mental activity predominates. The immigrants cannot compete with the employees.

The salaries of the employees are much more stable – less dependent on the fluctuations of seasonal demand and on the labour market. It has been seen that even the fluctuations in the cost of living of the middle class are much less drastic than those of the working class. This is possibly due to a greater stability of demand. All these are independent factors which result in the more favourable economic condition of the middle class. The above observations explain the great difference between the two classes. The difference is evident in the terms ‘worker’ and ‘employee’. Since our country is not industrialized, desk work is even better paid than manual labour: in other words, employees’ earnings are much higher than workers’ salaries.

4. On Land Reform*

It is already self-evident that one cannot even think of a simple distribution of land that does not include technical assistance and technical education. I also believe that it is important to stress the distinction between land reform and colonization.¹ Naturally, in a country such as ours – and in

* [Answer to a question put to Torres during a lecture at the National University, Bogotá, and reproduced in *Jueves de el Espectador*, 11 August 1960. – Ed.]

1. [By colonization, Torres means homesteading or clearing virgin lands. Minifundios are the tiny parcels of land holdings, too small to be economical. Latifundios are the huge estates, owned by the oligarchy (usually an absentee landlord), on which peasants work in feudal conditions. These phenomena are characteristic of most Latin-American countries. – Ed.]

most Latin-American countries – much land is uncultivated because of its inherent difficulties. On the other hand, here we have the two great problems of *minifundio* and *latifundio*, which are the central issues of land reform and which concern cultivated land, or at least land which can be cultivated. These lands are passed from one generation to another by the large landholding families, who surely would oppose the parcelling out of such lands that are now – or at least could be – productive for them.

To speak sincerely, land reform should not be considered only for uncultivated lands and for lands that cannot be cultivated. Land reform must be extended to lands already in use, lands which constitute a source of important production for the country. The simple parcelling out of these lands would lower the production, as has happened in all countries where this has been done. But if this land distribution is accompanied by facilities of credit, loans, technical aid, and agricultural training and if cooperatives are organized, many of the problems would probably be overcome. To do this, of course, is more complicated, more difficult, but, I believe, more realistic.

First of all, I want to answer what Doctor Castellanos said about the position of the landholding class concerning land reform. I believe that if we narrow the concept of land reform to exclude the technical aspects – the increasing of production, transportation, and marketing – we must consider principally the distribution of lands that are already productive or could be made productive again.

It was because of this last concept that I said the landholding class would oppose land reforms, not those landholders who are individually able to agree to distribution but rather the landholders acting as a social group. As a group they will work for their common interest. The distribution of productive lands would go precisely against those common interests.

To answer the question put to me about cooperatives, I believe that from the economic point of view it is obvious that if one of the purposes for land reform is to multiply the number of agricultural producers, it would be fiscally unsound to neglect to form a community to manage the general expenses of these many producers. With property divided, this could be attained only through the cooperative.

Naturally, the cooperative should not be regarded merely as a system: it should be regarded, above all, as a means of educating, of training, individuals to sacrifice individual interests for the collective good. It is clear that by itself the production cooperative cannot give good results. It must be linked with transportation cooperatives and consumer cooperatives to complete the cycle of production and economic distribution. I believe therefore that the cooperative must be **the basis of the land reform.**

I think this discussion, like all discussions, has clarified and synthesized many points. Thanks to this, I hope that we have reached an agreement, at least a theoretical agreement. In my opinion, the debate can be summarized as a classical sociological problem, the relationship of man to land – of man to property, as has been said here. If we designate property as the determining factor in the conduct of man, we would be called Marxists and unilateralists. If we suggest that man has dominion over economic matters and is completely independent from economics, we would be utopian idealists. As Christians we must accept the whole man – body and soul, spirit and matter. We must recognize the human factors, the economic factors, and the social factors.

Man's determining relationship to property is clearly expressed in the emphasis on the undeniable need for education, for technical training and expertise, for the organization of cooperatives and communities, and for organization in general. The influence of private property over the conduct of the individual is no less important. The problem is man's

insecurity as he faces his future. His capacity for increasing production to raise his standard of living, his educational level, and his social prestige depends in a very direct way on the possession of the means of production.

In theory we all agree on all this. We have had the consolation of hearing Doctor Castellanos, as representative of the landholding class, declare to us that he does not oppose distribution of the productive land. I hope that when the matter goes from theory into practice, the group that he represents will act more from national interest than from selfish group interests.

When I referred to the landholding class, I did not in any way mean to speak from a Marxist view of class struggle. I only wanted to express the sociological reality. The social class, conceived of scientifically, is the combination of individuals who form a group with the same interests, value systems, and motivation and who are aware of themselves as a group. This awareness of themselves is translated into institutions like those mentioned by Doctor Aguilera Camacho – labour unions that represent and defend the interests of each class or fraction of a class.

To answer the question addressed to me about land reform in other countries and the possibility of our benefiting from those experiences, I would say that there may well be positive elements in those experiences. However, we must not copy them just because they have been successful elsewhere. I believe that we have already had bitter experiences because of the indiscriminate adoption of foreign institutions without regard for our own local circumstances.

We should be familiar with the land reforms of other countries, but they cannot be useful to us except to the extent that they correspond to the specific conditions in our nation. To be acquainted with these conditions, we must conduct serious scientific research. Our planning should be based on the results of this scientific research, and the goal of our

planning should be greater efficiency in all our programmes. Whether our solutions eventually coincide with those adopted in Cuba, Mexico, China, Bolivia, or any other country in the world does not matter to us. We will not have adopted them because they coincide but, rather, because they serve local objectives.

5. Is the Priest a Witch Doctor?*

Is the priest a witch doctor? First of all, it seems to me that it is necessary to determine the nature of magic through the definitions of today's anthropologists and sociologists.

Despite similarities between magic and religion (from the point of view of human conduct, objectively considered), the professed authorities on the subject agree that there are certain basic differences between the two concepts.¹

We can summarize these differences by making three distinctions. Religion deals with fundamental problems of man – his origin, destiny, conduct, and ultimate goals – while magic is concerned with the details of daily life. Religion proposes long-range solutions, whereas magic offers only short-range solutions. Religion relies primarily on a supreme being, a higher power, whereas the efficiency of magic depends primarily on a human act.

* [Answer (printed in *La Nueva Prensa* [Bogotá], 23 August 1961) to a question put to Torres by Alvaro Tomás Mosquera, who explained that because of the church's rituals, the clergy's different habit, and so forth, the priest appears to play the role in society of a **modern witch doctor**. – Ed.]

1. See B. Malinowsky, *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1944; Joseph Needham, *Science, Religion, and Reality*, New York, Macmillan, 1925; J. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, New York, Macmillan, 1922; M. Yinger, *Religion, Society, and the Individual*, New York, Macmillan, 1957.

In spite of these fundamental theoretical differences, in actual situations – both social and individual – we frequently find magical elements in the practice of religion and in religious values. In Latin America we find this combination in varying degrees and in most diverse forms. The lack of studies about the role of magic in religious practice in Colombia as a whole prevents us from making truly scientific generalizations.

I believe that no objective social scientist can question the religious nature of Catholicism. Its dogmas, its patterns of conduct, and its values are of a religious – not magical – nature, according to the foregoing explanation. Therefore, the Catholic priest himself has no magical characteristics. This fact does not imply that magical powers may not have been attributed to him. In Colombia and in Latin America, it would be very interesting to study this kind of distorted concept among the average population. In the absence of a study of this type, anything we say is mere conjecture.

Today's phenomenologic philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists have studied the role of language and dress in personal and social relations. We know that language and dress are elements of social interaction. Like all forms of social interaction, language and dress presuppose a particular social aspiration. Hence, the mannerisms of speech and the customs of dress differ, not only because of membership in the various cultures and sub-cultures but also because of status and social rule.

There is popular language, language of the street, scientific language, ritual language. There are special costumes for ceremonies, for cultural events, and for other occasions. To determine whether or not ritual language or ritual garb may have magical functions, we should also distinguish between the content of beliefs and the attitude or social aspirations of persons who exercise and feel the impact of such language or dress. If we consider beliefs, we can state that language and

dress used in the Catholic rites have a religious – not a magical – character. But if we consider the social attitudes towards them, we must recognize that magical elements may be involved. Nevertheless, here again we lack the basic research that would make it possible to determine specifically how great a role these elements play.

It is interesting to note the present tendency of the Catholic church to adapt itself to contemporary life. Since the last war, there has been a great increase, in the celebration of religious services, in the use of the modern language of each country and in the use of ordinary dress. The suppression of the habit – the street dress of university students in the Middle Ages – has been left to the discretion of each bishop. To reach the proper decision requires an enlightened concept of the role of the pastor. In my opinion, it would be necessary for each diocese to study in depth the social impact that would follow the alteration of religious dress. In this way each district could determine the extent to which the use of habit encourages magical elements and interferes with religious elements.

The current tendency of the pastor is to reduce the distance between the clergy and the faithful while keeping intact the difference in roles. This tendency may lead to discontinuance of the use of religious garb. It may eventually be considered a hindrance to the pastor in a given diocese, in a given society, or in the world of today in general.

There are ways in which the entire question can be answered without falling into gratuitous generalizations which are more sentimental than scientific.

6. Building an Authentic Latin-American Sociology*

Latin-American culture, to say the least, is not very institutionalized. Some cultural patterns have not been integrated. Others, although they were part of our indigenous cultural heritage, have disappeared. Because of assimilated elements and elements of deculturation, many sociologists and anthropologists have been led to doubt the existence of a true Latin-American culture in the strictest sense.

Part of the new elements of culture is sociology as a science and as a method. In the *Cronicas de Indias* we do find true sociological and anthropological analyses. However, sociology, considered as a branch of science, was not cultivated in Latin America until the end of the past century and the beginning of the present century. Sociology here was not always up to scientific standards, it is true, but at least it bore the name of science. Undeniably, the new discipline has been an important and hitherto unknown element of culture.

Nonetheless, in Latin America the well-known schools of sociology of the United States and Europe have been copied more than they have been interpreted. Sociology has not been an exception to the mosaic of the cultural colonialism that coexists with economic and political colonialism. Given the not very autochthonous character of these cultural importations, their evolution within our continent is very minor

* [Paper read at the First Latin-American Conference on Schools and Departments of Sociology, 24-9 September 1961, at the Latin-American Faculty of Social Sciences, Buenos Aires; published in *Cuadernos Latinoamericanos de Economia Humana* (No. 4, Montevideo), 1961. - Ed.]

compared to the length of time they evolved in other continents.

Thus, the positive and empirical concept of sociology did not begin to be accepted generally in Latin America until after the last world war, several years after it had been accepted in Europe, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries. It was adopted as an imported concept and not as the culmination of a scientific process of the intellectuals of our countries. Nevertheless, the new orientation implies a scientific projection of our own circumstances. Positive science cannot be isolated from the concrete local milieu. Even less can social science. Sociological studies in Latin America have begun to multiply. Professional sociologists, usually trained in Europe and the United States, visit all our countries. At the Sixth Latin-American Congress of Sociology, held this year in Caracas, there was talk that the professional sociologists had prevailed over the simple amateurs. Positive research projects were quite numerous. There could now be talk of an official endorsement of positive sociology in our continent. Even so, the plague of scientific parasites does not yet appear ended. The vices of extracontinental sociology have been transmitted to us together with their virtues. The construction of an authentic Latin-American sociology has begun, although it is still at a very early stage.

I would like to refer here to only one of the common vices. I have chosen it because it is prevalent in university sociology in general and because it is closely linked to the subject of unauthenticity, with which I want to deal next. This vice is nominalism. Nominalism is the use of words not strictly related to the personal observations of the one who employs them. Nominalism places more emphasis on terminology than on observation of reality. It is the line of least resistance for the professional, since it makes him appear master of a science when he has only acquired a scientific vocabulary. This phenomenon has justified the definition of 'sociologist'

as 'a person who expresses in complicated and unintelligible words things that everybody knows from common sense'. Nominalism is so tempting to mediocrity that possibly in a few years we shall see our continent flooded with pseudo-scientists, proficient in sociological jargon and unable to observe our social conditions, to summarize their observations, or to generalize systematically about the characteristics of this reality.

All of us who are concerned with the formation of the sociology of the future must be alert to this danger. We must employ realistic teaching methods; we must be uncompromising about giving first-hand observation a priority over using empty and senseless terms. Otherwise, by frustrating the contribution of a positive sociology and losing the sense of realistic embodiment of the social phenomena that are typical of our continent, we will miss the merits of science guided by empirical methodology. Perhaps if we insist on field studies and combat irrational memorizing by students, we can elevate the profession in the future. In any case, methodology must have a first place among our academic concerns.

Many of us have heard debates as to whether it is legitimate to place geographical boundaries on a science. To what extent can we distinguish North American mathematics from Soviet mathematics except by the nationality of the scientists engaged in them? The same question is raised by the positive concept of social sciences. In so far as methods are standardized and generalizations are susceptible to empirical verification, the social sciences, in particular sociology, transcend religious, cultural, and geographical boundaries; they acquire a universal citizenship in the interaction of the modern sciences.

Nevertheless, the subject matter of the social sciences differs from the subject matter of other positive sciences. The geographical element – that is, the ecological – is essential to the overall consideration of a social complex. Thus, geo-

graphical specification is no detriment to the universality of a science. Sociology cannot therefore be called 'American', 'European', or 'Latin-American' in so far as general methods and universal laws are concerned. Dynamics and social structures take on specific forms within each culture and each subculture. In a word, we can speak of a 'Latin-American sociology' in that it has as its object the analysis and interpretation of the problems and typical situations of our regions and in that it must adapt methods and theories to these problems and specific situations.

I would like now to consider two dangers inherent in the development of a typically Latin-American sociology. The first we could call cowardice disguised as objectivity; the second we could call demagoguery disguised as a scientific value.

The urge for objectivity is a fully justifiable concern for any scientist but – because of his antecedents – especially for the Latin-American sociologist. Theoretical normalist sociology, so well suited to our Latin-American temperament, has caused us so much disappointment that we lack confidence in our ability to focus on our social conditions. Our society is a cauldron of urgent problems of every kind with which we involve our own sensibilities, our own intelligence, our entire selves. It is easy to allow ourselves to be impressed by the objectivism of social analyses. All this justifies our desire to keep a cold scientific objectivity in our work as sociologists.

However, all social problems should be the object of consideration and study by sociologists. To discriminate *a priori* between problems that presumably should be studied and problems that presumably should not be studied is not a scientific attitude. Moreover, if the most crucial problems are among those we exclude, we mutilate our field, depriving it of complete scientific integration.

It seems to me that in this attitude there is an element of professional ethics we cannot disdain. In my opinion the

scientist should not try to convert his own human personality into an abstraction except in so far as it might interfere with scientific purposes, for example, in value judgements. I believe that authentic scientific achievement will be jeopardized by discarding all valuable human qualities of the scientist, although those qualities cannot be classified as strictly methodological. Imagination, intuition, general culture, idealism, and generosity are imponderables. They are qualitative elements that can, on occasion, define what we are accustomed to call a scientist. Part of this 'existentialism', so to speak, is the need to experience the problems of one's own time and one's own concrete society. To dismiss the problems of our time and of Latin-American society from our sociological goals would not be justified scientifically except from the danger of losing objectivity. However, certain questions may well be asked. Do we not now possess a sufficiently standardized methodology? Do we not now possess human communications ample enough to allow us a universal criticism? Can we not aspire to such scientific formation as might enable us to cope with those problems which, if they were overlooked, would leave a great and important void in the concept of Latin-American reality? Are the controls of scientific objectivity in sociology still so rudimentary that we must deprive ourselves of the study of our most interesting social problems?

If the answer to the last question just stated were affirmative, then the classification of sociology as a science would be doubtful indeed. We would have to confine our sociological investigation to insignificant problems to assure objectivity. It seems to me that the present development of sociology permits us to be more optimistic. I believe we can state that, from the scientific point of view, there are insufficient reasons to evade the problems most deeply felt by our society. Such subjects as social revolution, social change, sociological effects of land reform, community development, and imperialism

must be on the agenda of Latin-American sociological problems. The mere excuse that these studies would jeopardize scientific objectivity seems to be no more than a way to disguise the cowardice of our sociologists who decline to deal with the problems that most urgently require interpretation **and analysis.**

In those countries where immediate problems are most critical, the development of research, analysis, and planning lags behind. This phenomenon is logical, but it implies a poor function of the institutions. Precisely the countries most in need of planning are those which, in general, are most **deficient in it.**

To devote enough time to research requires a strict, ascetic, scientific attitude lest we allow ourselves to be absorbed by immediate needs for action. The pressure of immediate needs makes research seem secondary and makes action seem basic. Without entering into a Byzantine discussion of values and priorities, we can decide that research and planning, very necessary as they are, are difficult to carry out in countries where immediate action is as drastically needed as it is in our Latin-American countries.

This phenomenon is especially manifest in the field of sociology. Thus, we see fewer and fewer investigators and more and more politicians. Polemical, emotional writings on problems of social achievement and social politics abound, to the detriment of scientific literature. Those who call themselves 'sociologists' are beginning to be victims of this **pressure of urgency.**

The position of the cowardly scientists is an argument in favour of abandoning research and viewing with scepticism the value of objectivity. The unimportant subjects preferred by the cowardly scientists, although dealt with in a cold and objective way, appear to be smokescreens to protect non-scientific interests: class interests, economic interests, **political interests.**

This scepticism about the objectivity of sociologists who belong to a given social class and are involved in a given political and social system can also be traced to the dogmatism of the false disciples of Marx and Engels. (Later on I will explain why I call them false disciples.) In their opinion, there should be a proletarian sociology and a bourgeois sociology just as there has been talk of proletarian art and bourgeois art, of proletarian genetics and bourgeois genetics, of proletarian mathematics and bourgeois mathematics. In other words, they say that class conditioning is total and absolute, that no scientist can overcome it in himself.

Naturally, we cannot deny that such a conditioning does exist. The cowardly scientists are proof that it exists. However, we cannot accept this conditioning as total, as governing all individuals. Marx and Engels themselves had analytical spirits sufficiently penetrating to realize this. Not only did they foresee – and observe – that a minority of the ruling class would have an attitude opposed to its own class interests. They used that minority for their revolution, and, at least very clearly in the case of Engels, they themselves did not belong to the proletariat for which they proclaimed themselves true spokesmen. Hence, Marx and Engels did not have such closed minds as some of their disciples do about class conditioning. If they recognized exceptions in a field in which objectivity is more difficult – the political field – how can their disciples fail to admit that exceptions exist in a strictly scientific field?

My intention here is not to deny that the activities of every individual are influenced by the class to which he belongs. We would not be sociologists if we did not declare that such an influence does exist. Neither do we want to imply that these influences are overcome ordinarily. It is a matter of exceptions – exceptions that occur only through discipline and scientific training, through self-criticism, through recognition of one's own value judgements, and

through acting with moral courage and professional ethics to keep those value judgements out of the objective investigation of facts.

However, to become this exception is to become a scientist. Therefore, it is difficult to find authentic scientists, and the true sociologist must be an exception.

Our sociologists are subjected to another pressure which can cause them to abandon the course of scientific objectivity. Although sceptical about it, they may, because of it, become activists or turn to political propaganda. This temptation is popularity.

For many sociologists it is a hard test to see that even among intellectuals cold analysis, although it concerns the most critical problems, produces less enthusiasm than demagogic exposition. The reasons are obvious, but the reaction of the scientist is no less real. The apparent failure to be popular causes a certain nostalgia for demagogic prestige. It is difficult to resist this temptation. It is difficult not to adopt a demagogic attitude and not to look for a scientific rationalization to justify it. The line of least resistance is that of branding indiscriminately as a cowardly scientist anyone who wants to stay in the realm of objectivity. We try then to disguise our demagoguery as scientific merit, consequently getting lost from the scientific field and surrendering ourselves to political demagoguery.

Just as no science is possible without scientists, no sociology will be authentically Latin-American without authentic Latin-American sociologists. The responsibility of those who are entrusted with the formation of the future Latin-American sociologists is indeed great. We must not deceive ourselves. We run the risk of forming nominalists and not scientists. Or we may concern ourselves and our students with transcendental matters in the guise of objectivity. Or we can fall into an anti-scientific demagoguery on the pretext of courage in the practice of our profession.

To tell the truth, we do not even have a clear concept of the meaning and value of Latin-American sociology. It is necessary that we make a scientific, systematic evaluation of Latin-American sociology and draw up a realistic plan of action. I believe that it is imperative that we begin to convert our sociology into a real sociology.

The future meetings of Latin-American sociologists must be oriented to those concrete problems. We must evaluate what exists. We must standardize methods. We must point out the pitfalls and name the problems that need investigation, as well as the subjects that must be taught. Possibly the next Latin-American Congress of Sociology, which will meet in Bogotá, will be an occasion to accomplish all this.

However, it is most important for our sociologists to have a sincere attitude of self-criticism in light of the present local problems. This attitude must be promoted in schools, departments of government, institutes, and faculties of sociology in the various countries. This attitude must be maintained in methods, research projects, and teaching programmes. It is the only way to guarantee that we will some day be able to build an authentic Latin-American sociology.

7. The Radio Schools of Sutatenza*

Introduction

The main characteristic of the distribution of the population of Colombia is its wide dispersion. According to the 1951

* [Study carried out by Torres and Berta Corredor Rodríguez from 1958 to 1961 under the direction of François Houtart of the Centre of Socio-religious Research as part of a general-study UNESCO programme on the social and religious changes in Latin America. Published as a monograph by Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, Bogotá, 1961. — Ed.]

census, 55.6 per cent of the inhabitants of Colombia either live in small settlements or are scattered around the countryside.

The world of rural Colombia shows similar characteristics: dispersion, isolation, traditionalism, stagnation, and cultural backwardness. The majority of the peasants live in small settlements along the pathways (*veredas*). Some have their own plot of land from which the family manages to live. Most of them are landless day labourers or tenant farmers; they live in rented huts, dependent economically on a landowner or boss. The geography and social characteristics of the country contribute to the dispersion of the peasant families. They do not think of their home and the land they cultivate as two separate entities since their living accommodation is dependent upon their work.

These characteristics deeply affect the demography of Colombia for a number of reasons. Dispersion brings with it geographical and cultural isolation. The high mountains and deep valleys are natural barriers against any physical contact between groups of people. The lack of means of communication in the vast areas of the country increases both geographical and spiritual isolation. The lack of social contact encourages traditionalism among the peasantry. Their ignorance of a better mode of life keeps them at a low cultural level.

Within this difficult framework, it was necessary to seek a means of communication which could effectively reach all the scattered peasant holdings and, at the same time, bring them out of their backwardness and free them from their material and cultural hunger. The ACPO (People's Cultural Movement), by means of its Sutatenza radio schools, brain-child of a priest, was the ideal instrument to deal with this stage of the rural awakening.

History of the People's Cultural Movement

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

Sutatenza is a typical village of the Colombian Andes, with a population of 6,898. The last census showed that 97.7 per cent of its inhabitants lived scattered over an area of 150 square kilometres; the difference between the highest and lowest point of this area is more than 2,000 metres. Only 2.3 per cent of these people were gathered together into a small settlement, the religious and administrative centre of the area.

The inhabitants of Sutatenza lived almost primitively, like the majority of Colombian peasants. They worked their land using inefficient and rudimentary methods. At least half the land surface of Sutatenza had been affected by erosion to the point of rendering it useless for cultivation. The pathways, impassable in the rainy season, prevented communication among the peasants. The huts of mud and straw, badly built and badly maintained, constituted a permanent danger for the well-being of the family.

The illiteracy rate was very high; the inhabitants could not read or write, and – what is worse – they were not interested in learning.

The monotony of rural life, the almost total lack of cultural amenities, and the discomfort of their way of life resulted in the peasants going habitually to the wine cellars, where they consumed great quantities of *chicha* and cane liquor (*guarapo*) as an escape from the bitter realities of their existence.

In August 1947, Father José Joaquín Salcedo arrived at Sutatenza as assistant to the parish. From his very first days there, he studied and evaluated the almost subhuman situation of his scattered parishioners, and, with apostolic zeal, he

plunged himself into the task of peasant redemption. He did not spend time preaching against alcoholism, ignorance, or misery; he used quite different methods and techniques of persuasion.

In the square of Sutatenza, he initiated the parishioners into the mysteries of moving figures on a screen. The peasants thought they were in another world. Long after the projection had ended, they still remained grouped together in amazement around the apparatus, which they respectfully admired. Father Salcedo had taken a first step.¹

In September he had the first 100-watt transmitter installed. He gave a receiver to one of the local people with the task of taking it to certain peasant homes, at known distances from the centre. Upon arriving at the first house, the messenger was to tune the radio to receive the message which Father Salcedo would transmit from Sutatenza, since he had judged the time it would take the messenger to arrive. Then he would go to the other houses, repeat the test, and return to the parish to say whether the signals could be heard. This experiment was the beginning of the radio schools. That same month, the three first receivers were installed in the settlement of Irzón as an initial step towards organizing the first three radio schools.²

Father Salcedo repeated his film shows, which the people came to like more and more. After the shows, he gave simple speeches in which he pointed out the urgency of changing peasant life. Thus, he created the right atmosphere and awakened the interest of the people of Sutatenza in bettering their conditions. The priest asked for help to build a theatre and promised to record the voice of anyone who helped. Soon he transmitted by radio the voices of parishioners to their

1. *Los Unescos en América Latina*, Paris, UNESCO, 1956, p. 2; taken from *El Correo* (No. 2), 1955.

2. S. Ferrer Martín, *Acción Cultural Popular: Historia de las Escuelas Radiofónicas*, Bogotá, 1959, p. 1.

amazed families, and sixty men arrived each day at the village to work on the theatre building. At the centre and in the settlements, bazaars were held to collect funds. The local people contributed generously with their labour, their money, and gifts in kind. In three years 200,000 pesos were collected for the work of Radio Sutatenza.³

The reasons for the success of the nascent institution were, on one hand, the great tenacity and organizing ability of Monsignor Salcedo and, on the other hand, the limitless faith and confidence of the peasants in the priest.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S CULTURAL MOVEMENT (ACPO): CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

First Stage

1947

Father José Joaquín Salcedo arrives as parochial assistant at Sutatenza, Boyacá (Colombia).

1948

Father Salcedo makes two visits to the United States. In the first, he explains before the United Nations the importance of radio transmission as a means of educating the peasantry. He negotiates a contract with an electrical firm for construction of a 1,000-watt transmitter, model XT-1A. He makes contacts, with the aim of getting help in the supply of material for the radio schools. During the second journey, he makes a contract for the construction of a 25,000-watt transmitter.

In Holland he arranges for the manufacture of 5,000 specially-designed receivers for the radio school.

1949

The radio school movement extends to the Cundinamarca region with the installation of the first receiver and the or-

3. *Los Unescos* . . . , p. 3.

ganization of a school in the parish of Tibirita, near Sutatenza.

The second 250-watt transmitter is installed and the number of radio school receivers is increased. The first meeting of the constituent assembly of the People's Cultural Movement is held in the town of Tunja.

1950

The third 1,000-watt transmitter is installed. The building of the People's Cultural Movement in Sutatenza is inaugurated. Upon completing the first stage, ACPO has the following organization :

1. Directing body.
2. Corporation, consisting of founding members and ordinary members.
3. Advisory council.
4. Secretary General's office, with the following departments :
 - a. Teaching personnel.
 - b. Publications.
 - c. Programme section.
 - d. Correspondence.
 - e. Accounts.
 - f. Statistics.
 - g. Filing.
 - h. Cultural theatre.
 - i. Recording.
 - j. Workshop and laboratory.

Second Stage⁴

1951

ACPO acquires legal status and is made a diocesan enterprise by disposition of Angel María Ocampo, Bishop of Tunja.

4. Ferrer Martín, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-4.

1952

Work is organized in accordance with the circumstances of the radio schools already set up and with new projects for the future.

1953

New 25,000-watt transmitters are set up for Radio Sutatenza. There is a message and blessing from Pope Pius XII.

The statutes of ACPO are changed. The first general assembly of ACPO meets in Bogotá.

1954

A contract is signed in Bogotá by Monsignor Ocampo Barrio, Bishop of Tunja, and the president of ACPO in Bogotá, the Papal Nuncio, and the representative of the Phillips Company for the importation of 10,000 radios destined for the radio schools of Bogotá.

In Paz de Río (Boyacá), Radio Belencito ('Little Bethlehem'), the first subsidiary of Radio Sutatenza, is installed and begins to operate.

In Sutatenza the building of the Boys' Institute is inaugurated, with a capacity for 125 pupils. It begins with thirty-nine pupils under the direction of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

1955

In the capital of the Republic, the following are inaugurated: (1) Radio Sutatenza in Bogotá; (2) the building of the stores and workshops of ACPO.

1956

In Sutatenza the Girls' Institute is opened, with a capacity of 200 pupils. It begins with sixty pupils, directed by the Sisters of San Antonio de Padua, an Argentine group.

In Bogotá construction is begun on the ACPO building.

1957

300,000 copies of the reading pamphlet 'Basic Education' are distributed in the radio schools of Colombia.

The second general assembly of ACPO is set up, with twenty-nine prelates and 300 parish priests attending.

1958

The first issue of the weekly *El Campesino* appears, with 29,000 copies (29 June).

Prelates attending the XIX Episcopal Conference inaugurate the ACPO building in Bogotá.

A promulgation of the Pastoral Instruction of the Colombian Episcopate on peasant culture appears.

1959

Inauguration of the Seminary for Studies on Rural Problems, Peasant Organization, and Education in Sutatenza. Ninety-seven parish priests from all over the country, the President of the Republic, four ministers, and the ACPO leaders attend inauguration (19-22 February).

Circulation begins of the weekly *El Campesino*, with 100,000 ordinary copies and 123,000 copies of the extra edition.

1960

In Sutatenza a week of studies named 'Cardinal Spellman' is held, patronized by the Archbishop of New York, Francis Cardinal Spellman. One hundred and fifteen theologians attend from all over the country (18-26 January).

Fifty-watt broadcasting apparatus is inaugurated in Sutatenza, designed to transmit programmes to pupils of the radio schools who have completed the first stage of basic education (11 June). (See Table 1 for a statistical summary of development from 1948 to 1959.)

Study of Three Types of Parishes Where Radio Schools Are in Operation

OBJECT

1. To evaluate the influence of APCO as a means of pastoral and social church action in the rural areas and to evaluate the social changes brought about by this influence.

2. To evaluate the influence of other institutions and instruments of change in the same areas.

3. To identify the chief factors of cultural stagnation in families where no change has taken place, although they form part of these parishes.

MATERIAL OBJECTIVE

From the point of view of the parochial organization of ACPO, the parishes where radio schools are in operation have been grouped under three headings:

1. There is an energetic parish priest who concerns himself daily with the spiritual and material advancement of his parishioners. He has the community organized by way of settlement committees, set up by rural leaders who collaborate effectively in the communal work carried out by the parish. He knows how to use the human assets under his jurisdiction. He seeks the active participation of rural leaders in apostolic works. The parochial representative enjoys great authority as a leader. He organizes, controls, and stimulates the functioning of the radio schools by means of:

a. Campaigns of religious and social instruction and indoctrination.

b. Frequent visits to schools.

c. Monthly meetings of immediate assistants to keep track of the functioning of the radio schools, to attend conferences,

Table 1

Parochial Movement of Organized Radio Schools

Year	Parishes		Receivers Installed	
	Number	Index Base, 100 = 1950	Number	Index Base, 100 = 1950
1948	1	4.5	3	1.0
1949	14	63.6	103	34.0
1950	22	100.0	303	100.0
1951	46	209.1	453	149.5
1952	111	504.6	3,403	1,123.1
1953	318	1,445.5	5,703	1,882.2
1954	412	1,872.7	11,703	3,862.4
1955	533	2,422.8	19,259	6,356.1
1956	740	3,363.7	29,193	9,634.7
1957	855	3,886.4	37,174	12,268.0
1958	871	3,959.1	42,174	13,918.0
1959	*	—	45,914	15,153.0

Year	Schools Organized		Percentage of Schools Organized, on Basis of Receivers Installed
	Number	Index Base, 100 = 1950	
1948	3	1.0	100.0
1949	103	34.0	100.0
1950	303	100.0	100.0
1951	430	141.9	94.9
1952	904	298.4	26.6
1953	1,804	595.4	31.6
1954	6,422	2,119.5	54.7
1955	7,512	2,479.2	39.0
1956	9,991	3,297.4	34.2
1957	15,221	5,023.5	40.9
1958	18,146	5,988.0	43.0
1959	*	—	—

* Data on the number of parishes and schools organized are still being compiled.

Source: Acción Cultural Popular, Statistics Department.

and to request statistical data. Average attendance is 80 per cent.

d. Regular contact with central and regional ACPO offices (sending of data and requesting teaching material, batteries, and so forth).

e. Contact with rural workers and understanding of their problems.

2. The rural community is organized into settlement councils which act sporadically. Leaders give their help to parochial work, but personal interest is the main motivating factor. There are radio schools organized under the immediate supervision of the parish priest or parochial representative. Monthly meetings of on-the-spot assistants have an average attendance lower than 80 per cent, without the regular participation of the priest. He maintains continual contact with the central ACPO offices in order to send statistical data and request equipment and teaching material.

3. There are parishes without any organization of the rural community. The natural leaders direct and orient the inhabitants of their settlements only sporadically. The parish priest has not taken on responsibility for the work corresponding to him within ACPO for a variety of reasons, which may include overwork, ill health, or instability. In these places there are radio schools in existence, but they function irregularly, and in some settlements there is general radio broadcasting. The radio schools are controlled indirectly by the parish priest by means of monthly meetings of on-the-spot assistants who supply the priest with statistical data and request the material they need.

Given the limitations of time and financial resources, an investigation of three parishes only was possible, representing the three types listed and selected from within one single geographical region. These three parishes are (1) Manta, (2) Sutatenza, and (3) Guateque.

The three parishes selected are situated in the inter-Andean

zone called Valle de Tenza on the eastern slopes of the Oriental Mountains. They have roughly similar physical characteristics and are inhabited by a homogeneous population that shares a common history. The cultural factor has determined here a prevailing economy, which points up, as in no other area of the country, all the physical, climatic, and social phenomena of this interesting region of eastern Colombia.⁵ In each one of these villages, a sample was made on the following basis:

1. Families under the direct influence of ACPO by way of the radio schools and their representatives.
2. Families under the simultaneous influence of ACPO and other institutions and agents of change (STACA,⁶ health centres).
3. Families subject to the influence of institutions and personnel other than ACPO (STACA, schools, health centres, the Agrarian Savings Bank, and so forth).
4. Families not subject to any catalytic influence.

The families selected were considered to be the most representative within their group (see Table 2).

Table 2

Composition of the Sample of Families

Parishes	Number of Families Selected				
	ACPO	ACPO and Others	Others	None	Total
Guatque	6	1	4	5	16
Sutatenza	6	10	—	4	20
Manta	6	11	—	3	20
	—	—	—	—	—
Total	18	22	4	12	56

5. See Luis Duque Gómez, 'El Municipio de Manta. Estudio Socio-Económico', *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* (Vol. VII, Bogotá), 1958.

6. [Colombian Agricultural Extension Technical Service. - Ed.]

Families subject to influence of ACPO have organized radio schools or form part of them (see Table 3).

Table 3

Composition of the Sample of Schools

Parishes	Radio Schools		
	<i>Schools Organized</i>	<i>Schools Selected</i>	<i>Percentage of Selected Schools</i>
Guatque	9	5	55.0
Sutatenza	54	11	20.0
Manta	100	19	19.0
Total	163	35	21.5*

* Average.

METHODS OF WORKING

For the sample, two formulas were used in order to obtain the information.

Formula 1

1. Situation of each of the schools, specifying region, town, settlement, type of school, and distance in time to the nearest official school.

2. Receiving apparatus: condition (good, moderate, bad), reasons, number of repairs, life of batteries and place obtained.

3. Teaching materials distributed by ACPO; its nature, quantity (sufficient or insufficient), supply (on-time or delayed), and reasons.

4. On-the-spot assistants: monthly income, education, and years of service.

5. Pupils: age, sex, marital status, occupation, level of education, weekly attendance, number of pupils who began work, and number in attendance.

Formula 2

Circumstances

1. Demography.

- a. Age groups : men (studying, working, unemployed).
- b. Degree of education : literacy in radio schools and official schools.

2. Accommodations.

- a. Structure (floors, walls, roofs).
- b. Basic amenities (bedrooms, beds, kitchen).
- c. Secondary amenities (sitting room, dining room, hallway).
- d. Services (water, lavatory, wash basin).
- e. Mode of living (furniture, cleanliness).

3. Agriculture.

- a. Soil preservation.
- b. Soil improvement.
- c. Reforestation.
- d. Soil preparation.
- e. Seeds and farming.
- f. Standard of crop.
- g. Care of crop.
- h. Tools used.
- i. Preservation of harvest.
- j. Organization of sales.

4. Institutional credit.

5. Land tenure.

6. Day wages.

7. Agricultural improvement.

- a. Domestic plot.
- b. Chickens.
- c. Dairy cattle.
- d. Pigs.
- e. Beehives.

8. Food.

a. Consumption of meat, milk, eggs, fruit, garden products.

b. Usual drink.

9. Prophylactic measures against disease.

a. Vaccination.

b. Domestic first aid.

10. Social activities.

Attitudes

1. When change has occurred.

a. Influence of institutions, people, facts.

b. Effectiveness of institutions and people.

c. Motive for aid (politics, religion, desire to give service, obligation).

d. Confidence in institutions and people.

2. When no change has occurred.

a. Acceptance of change in accommodation, crops, herds, food.

b. Reasons for acceptance.

c. Obstacles to change.

d. Institutions and people leading to possible change.

e. Expectancy of effectiveness.

3. Needs felt.

a. Family needs.

b. Local needs.

c. Parish needs.

4. Conformity or nonconformity.

a. Reasons for conformity.

b. Reasons for nonconformity.

5. Possibility of change (potential elements of social change in the activities of ACPO).

RESULTS OF INQUIRY

Types of Radio Schools and Their Distance from Official Schools

The majority of schools are of the non-family type. The reasons for this are lack of financial means, lack of on-the-spot help in each family, and sociability. The settlement peasants, united by ties of blood and friendship, prefer these schools, which give them a chance to get together with their neighbours.

The average distance in time to the nearest official school is twenty-two minutes on foot. The craggy paths, which can only be negotiated on foot or, sometimes, on horseback, are more hazardous in the rainy season. (See Table 4 for specific details.)

Table 4

Number of Family and Non-Family Schools and Distance from Official School

Parish	Family School		Non-family School		Total		Distance in Minutes from Official School (on Foot)
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	
Guateque	1	20.0	4	80.0	5	100	26
Sutatenza	6	54.5	5	45.5	11	100	19
Manta	8	42.1	11	57.9	19	100	23

Functioning of the Receivers

The highest percentage of well-functioning receivers were in Manta (89.5 per cent), which is an example of a well-organized village. Sutatenza followed with 72.7 per cent, and in last place was Guateque with 60 per cent. In inverse order, placed according to non-functioning of receivers, are Guate-

que (40 per cent), Sutatenza (18.2 per cent), and Manta (10.5 per cent). As reasons for this, we note lack of batteries in 82 per cent of cases, either because of lack of financial resources of those interested or because of an insufficient supply in the village to meet the demand (see Table 5).

With the exception of Sutatenza, where the ACPO laboratory is situated, the other villages have no repair shops or workshops, and owners of receivers are obliged to travel to the towns (Chocontá, Bogotá, Tunja); this involves travelling expenses, time, and other problems which the peasants often cannot overcome.

Teaching Materials

Manta is first in adequacy of teaching material and in prompt supply of such material (see Table 6). It can be asserted that good functioning of radios, as well as sufficient supply of teaching material, depends on the constant activity of ACPO representatives in the villages concerned.

On-the-Spot Assistants

The average number of male assistants (61.2 per cent) is greater than that of female assistants (38.8 per cent), although in villages of the intermediate type (Sutatenza), there is a higher percentage of women (54.5 per cent). The average age is 33.6 years for men and 30.0 for women. It is worth mentioning that in Sutatenza a nine-year-old assistant was found who had served in ACPO for two years. From the pedagogical point of view, it is not advisable that assistants should be less than twelve years old, since they lack personality and respect among the group they are teaching and directing.

The marital status of assistants varies between men and women: 100 per cent of female assistants are unmarried, while 34.5 per cent of the men are unmarried. Although 58.9

Table 5

Functioning of the Receivers

Parish	Functioning of Receivers				Reasons		Average Life of Battery	Place Bought	Number of Repairs	Cost in Pesos
	Good	Moderate	Bad	Non-functioning	Total	No Battery	Bulb Gone			
Guatemala	60.0%	—%	—%	40.0%	100%	100%	—%	14.8 mos.	—	\$—
Sutatenza	72.7	9.1	—	18.2	100	50	50	10.0	9	45
Manta	89.5	—	—	10.5	100	100	—	11.0	6	37

Table 6
Teaching Materials

Parish	Specification			Quantity			Supply			
	Pictures	Books	Exercise Books	Pencils	Black-board	Chalk	Enough	Not Enough	On-Time	Delayed
Guatateque	174	10	62	51	1	3	—%	100.0%	60.0%	40.0%
Sutatenza	405	134	112	102	8	7	36.4	63.6	54.5	45.5
Manta	927	160	138	137	19	18	89.5	10.5	100.0	—
Total	1,506	304	312	290	28	28	41.9*	58.1*	71.5*	28.5*

* Average.

Table 7
On-the-Spot Assistants

Parish	Male Assistants										Average Monthly Income
	Average Age	Marital Status			Occupation			Education		Years of Service	
		Single	Married	Widowed	Farming	Building	Elementary	Institute			
Guatque	27	25.0%	75.0%	—%	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%	25.0%	1 yr. 5 mos.	\$ 97.50	
Sutatenza	32	60.0	20.0	20.0	100.0	—	100.0	40.0	6 yrs. 6 mos.	87.50	
Manta	41	18.2	81.8	—	100.0	—	100.0	18.2	3 yrs. 9 mos.	125.45	
Average	33	34.5%	58.9%	6.6%	91.7%	8.3%	100.0%	27.7%	3 yrs. 6 mos.	\$103.48	

Parish	Female Assistants										Average Monthly Income
	Average Age	Marital Status			Occupation			Education		Years of Service	
		Single	Married	Dress-making	Domestic Service	Teaching	Elementary	Institute			
Guatque	30	100.0%	—%	100.0%	—%	—%	100.0%	—%	3 mos.	\$60.00	
Sutatenza	36	100.0	—	33.3	33.4	33.3	100.0	33.0	6 yrs. 8 mos.	64.00	
Manta	26	100.0	—	62.5	25.0	12.5	100.0	25.0	3 yrs. 6 mos.	46.00	
Average	30	100.0%	—%	65.2%	19.5%	15.3%	100.0%	19.4%	3 yrs. 6 mos.	\$56.00	

per cent of the men working in ACPO are married, women stop working as assistants as soon as they get married. The husband takes on this function. This attitude can be explained by the obedience of the wife, her household chores, and the prestige held by the head of the household within the group.

The male assistants with the highest income come from the well-organized villages, with an average \$125.45 monthly. In the badly-organized villages, the monthly average is \$97.50. The general average (\$103.48) is very low if it is taken into account that 60 per cent of assistants are heads of families. The women receive a monthly income of \$56.60; Sutatenza has the highest income (\$64), and Manta the lowest (\$46). (See Table 7 for full details.)

Pupils: Age Groups

The majority of pupils fall into the age group 7-14 (see Table 8). According to information collected on the spot, the reasons are:

1. Ability to attend classes in their own homes or in houses very near by.
2. Dissatisfaction of fathers with some teachers in official schools because of ill-treatment of children and because of demands for uniforms and teaching materials, which many cannot afford.
3. Pedagogical deficiency of teaching personnel.
4. Isolation of rural school within the settlement. The teacher does not know the community, its institutions, and long-established methods of working. He does not go near the houses or participate in the life of the community.
5. Scarcity of economic resources. This means that children of school age must participate actively in field work and domestic jobs, which prevents regular attendance at official schools.

Table 8
Percentages of Pupils Grouped According to Age and Sex

Parish	Under 7		From 7 to 14		From 15 to 19		From 20 to 64		65 and Over		Total							
	F	M	Total F	M	Total F	M	Total F	M	Total F	M	Total F	M	Total					
Guatque	6.5	2.7	9.2	28.8	36.1	64.9	1.8	5.5	7.3	6.5	11.1	17.6	1.0	—	1.0	44.6	55.4	100.0
Sutatenza	—	0.8	0.8	31.5	20.6	52.1	3.3	8.3	11.6	18.2	16.5	34.7	0.8	—	0.8	46.2	53.8	100.0
Manta	3.8	3.2	7.0	24.2	22.5	46.7	6.6	6.0	12.6	12.2	19.2	31.4	1.7	0.6	2.3	48.5	51.5	100.0

Pupils in the fourth age group, 20-64 years, have second place in the scale. The parish of Guateque is in a lower position than the others, because in settlements where there are radio schools children have taken the place of adults for the reasons given above. Adults do not attend schools where there are children of school age since they want to be with their own group and they do not like combining with minors. This reaction is natural and logical if one takes into account their maturity, experience, and social position.

The difference in percentage of the two sexes shows a majority of females: 10.8 per cent in Guateque, 7.6 per cent in Sutatenza, and 3 per cent in Manta.

Weekly Attendance

The highest weekly attendance is in Manta (see Table 9), because of the excellent organization of the schools in this

Table 9

Weekly Attendance

Parish	Total Pupils	Total Weekly Attendance		Average Number of Days Weekly
		Number	Per cent	
Guateque	108	470	72.5	4.35
Sutatenza	121	560	77.1	4.62
Manta	182	892	81.5	4.90
Total	411	1,922	79.8*	—

* Average

parish and the growing interest of the peasants in taking advantage of the classes and the education given by radio.

In the villages of Guateque and Manta, there has been

an increase of 68 per cent and 20 per cent respectively over initial registration. Only in Sutatenza has there been a decrease – of 6 per cent (see Table 10). The success in maintaining and increasing the number of pupils in the radio schools

Table 10

General Attendance Figures (January–May 1960)

Parish	Number of Pupils Who Registered	Number Pupils Attending	Increase		Decrease	
			No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Guateque	64	108	44	68	—	—
Sutatenza	129	121	—	—	8	6
Manta	151	182	13	20	—	—

is due to the efficiency of the on-the-spot assistants and to the stimulus given by the respective parish priests.

Number of People Made Literate by Official Schools and Radio Schools, and Number of Illiterates (7 to 64 Years)

The official schools have the highest percentage of literates. The radio schools of Sutatenza lead over the others (with 28.5 per cent) because the ACPO representatives (parish priest and parochial assistants) have worked tirelessly in this direction. In addition, the farm institutes in the locality are an incentive to young and adult illiterates, who want to rise out of their ignorance and enter the peasant educational centres. Manta has the lowest percentage of illiteracy, followed by Sutatenza and Guateque, in spite of the fact that this parish has several educational centres (primary schools and colleges). (See Table 11 for detailed figures.)

The continuous activity of ACPO and its representatives in the parishes has contributed effectively to reducing illiteracy in the rural areas. Members of families subject to this

Table 11

Persons Made Literate by Official and Radio Schools (in Percentages)

Parish	Literates		Illiterates		Total				
	Official Schools		Radio Schools						
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total			
Guatèque	27.6	27.6	55.2	1.4	7.2	8.6	63.8	36.2	100.0
Sutatenza	27.2	30.7	57.9	16.0	12.5	28.5	86.4	13.6	100.0
Manta	34.5	43.0	77.5	5.3	5.3	10.6	88.1	11.9	100.0

Table 12

Improvement in Rural Living Accommodations (in Percentages). 1960 Sample

Parish	Structure		Basic Amenities				Secondary Amenities				Services		Mode of Living		
			Bed-		Kitchen	Beds	Stores	Sitting Room	Hall-way	Dining Room	Water	Lava-tory	Wash Basin	Furni-ture	Clean-liness
	Floors	Walls	Roofs	room											
Guatèque	50.0	68.7	18.7	18.7	31.2	18.7	31.2	18.7	6.2	—	6.2	6.2	12.5	18.7	31.2
Sutatenza	55.0	60.0	30.0	30.0	75.0	35.0	35.0	15.0	10.0	10.0	20.0	20.0	30.0	35.0	15.0
Manta	75.0	90.0	20.0	35.0	90.0	30.0	40.0	15.0	20.0	—	10.0	—	5.0	50.0	20.0

influence wake up to the reality of their ignorance and enter the schools to learn how to read and write.

Changes Brought About in Those Rural Areas Subject to the Influence of ACPO and Other Institutions

ACCOMMODATIONS

As can be seen Table 12, improvement in the various aspects of living accommodations has followed the following scale of importance for the peasants.

Structure: Floors, Walls, Roofs

The walls show the highest percentage of improvement, because the exterior appearance of the house is a prestige factor among rural families.

Basic Amenities: Bedroom, Kitchen, Beds, Stores

The kitchen is the most important place in the house, and this explains the interest shown by the peasant in improving it. It has an essential function in family life: it not only serves for food preparation but is regarded as the meeting place and refuge of the family with the same spirit of intimacy which characterizes all its members. In improvement of bedrooms and beds, Manta takes first place, with 30 per cent and 35 per cent respectively. The people still have no conception of the dangers of overcrowding and promiscuity between the sexes.

The situation is becoming grave, since the family size, as in the rest of rural Colombia, is relatively high. According to the inquiry, the average number of people in a family is 5.5 in Guateque, 5.3 in Sutatenza, and 5.4 in Manta. Living accommodations consist of two rooms, a kitchen and a bed-

room; this situation is detrimental to family health. These characteristics are largely a result of the surroundings as well as of a cultural tradition that has not undergone any basic influences which might encourage a change in the habits and customs passed down for centuries, from pre-conquest times to the present.⁷

Way of Life: Furniture, Cleanliness

Questions of prestige move the peasants to adorn their houses with rustic furniture either to receive their relations and friends or to enjoy a minimum of comfort. In Manta 50 per cent of the families questioned have furniture; in Sutatenza, 35 per cent; in Guateque, 18.7 per cent.

The percentage of cleanliness and good maintenance is highest in Guateque (31.2 per cent) owing to the ease of communications, which permit greater social intercourse. In second place is Manta (20 per cent), and Sutatenza (15 per cent) is last.

Services: Water, Lavatory, Wash Basin

Sutatenza has the highest percentage (23.3 per cent), followed by Guateque (8.3 per cent) and Manta (3.3 per cent). Improvement is very difficult in this area. The reasons are many, and some are difficult to remedy, such as scarcity of springs and of financial resources. Vigorous, dynamic campaigns are needed to arouse sanitary awareness in the people so that they take responsibility for so serious a problem.

FOOD

Table 13 enables us to establish a comparison of the influence and results of food improvement programmes in three kinds

7. See Luis Duque Gómez, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

Table 13

Consumption of Basic Foods (Frequency of Consumption): 1960 Sample

Parish	Basic Foods Consumed										Drinks Consumed		
	Milk		Eggs		Garden Produce		Meat		Fruit		Water		Beer
	Per cent of Per- sons	Average Number of Days per Week	Per cent of Per- sons	Average Number of Days per Week	Per cent of Per- sons	Average Number of Days per Week	Per cent of Per- sons	Average Number of Days per Week	Per cent of Per- sons	Average Number of Days per Week	Per cent of Per- sons	Per cent of Per- sons	Per cent of Per- sons
Guatque	34.0	5	46.5	2	22.0	4	67.0	1	25.0	5	6.2	87.6	6.2
Sutatenza	45.8	6	68.2	3	54.6	5	73.8	2	19.6	2	10.0	90.0	—
Manta	90.0	7	91.6	6	57.4	6	97.2	4	32.4	6	10.0	90.0	—

of parishes. Milk is the food with the highest degree of consumption, as a result of the campaign concerning dairy cattle carried out by ACPO and the Agrarian Savings Bank. Consumption of meat has the lowest average in all villages. The economic factor is of great importance here.

Guarapo (cane liquor) is the basic drink for approximately 90 per cent of the peasant population in the sample. The remaining 10 per cent drink unboiled water and, on certain occasions, sparkling beverages and beer. From the health point of view, the consumption of *guarapo* constitutes a permanent danger to the peasants, because the water is 100 per cent contaminated and anything made from it is a danger to health. It is very important that ACPO should initiate an educational campaign directed towards improving the healthfulness of the basic drinks.

HYGIENE

Sutatenza has the highest percentage of vaccinated persons, because ACPO and the Health Unit have carried out campaigns jointly in this direction. The campaign for domestic first aid has also given good results in Sutatenza, where 60 per cent of families have their home medicine cabinet and 40 per cent use it (see Table 14).

AGRICULTURE

The region has homogeneous topographical characteristics which allow a comparison of the improvement made in the three parishes (see Table 15). The soil-preservation campaigns have made advances in the past few years. Sowing on hill slopes has increased 90 per cent in Manta and Sutatenza and 62.5 per cent in Guateque. The rotation of crops shows lower percentages.

Table 14

Prophylactic Measures: Vaccination and Domestic First Aid (in Percentages)

Parish	Vaccinated Households	Vaccinated Individuals				Domestic First Aid (Families)	
		Typhus	Diph- theria	Whoop- ing Cough	BCG	First Aid Materials	Utiliza- tion
Guatèque	37.4	18.1	6.8	7.9	3.4	6.2	6.2
Sutatenza	60.0	25.2	74.0	27.0	31.7	60.0	40.0
Manta	61.0	28.7	0.9	0.9	66.6	50.0	45.0

The Valle de Tenza has suffered a continuous process of splitting up of landholdings over a long period, until the land has acquired the characteristics of the *minifundio* to a high degree, with its bad effects on rational cultivation. This phenomenon may have its origin in the old system of self-preservation which was in operation until the beginning of last century and which divided the land according to inheritance-by-usage among members of the rural community throughout several generations. The process continues today, although on a smaller scale.⁸ The *minifundio* is a factor negatively affecting the rotation of crops.

Soil improvement is carried out by the application of chemical or organic fertilizers, lime, irrigation, and so forth. Sutatenza has first place in soil improvement, because of the educational and institutional facilities at its disposal (the farm institute, the experimental farm of ACPO-STACA). As for reforestation, the highest percentage is of fruit trees: Manta (95 per cent), with an average of 105 trees planted, Sutatenza

8. See Luis Duque Gómez, *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* (Vol. VIII), 1958, p. 139.

Improvement of Agricultural Methods (in Percentages)

Parish	Soil Preservation			Soil Improvement				Soil Preparation		
	Hill Seeding	Hedges	Hill Ploughing	Crop Rotation	Compost Heaps	Use of Compost	Use of Lime	Draining and Irrigation	Manual Ploughing	Mechanical Ploughing
Guatque	62.5	6.25	62.5	—	18.7	93.7	18.7	68.0	6.2	93.8
Sutatenza	90.0	65.00	90.0	40.0	60.0	90.0	35.0	45.0	15.0	85.0
Manta	90.0	90.00	90.0	35.0	55.0	90.0	5.0	55.0	—	100.0

Parish	Reforestation		Seeds		Plant Health		Plant Tending		Preservation of Harvest from						
	House-holds	Plantations	Average for Wood	Average for Trees	Ornamental Trees	Disinfection	Infested	Weeding Selection	Supports	Pruning	Weevils	Damp	Rats		
Guatque	31.2	6.0	87.5	6.0	12.1	20	18.7	12.1	18.7	100.0	100.0	18.7	12.1	56.2	31.2
Sutatenza	15.0	20.0	80.0	13.7	35.0	5	90.0	25.0	55.0	95.0	95.0	15.0	25.0	55.0	70.0
Manta	30.0	30.0	75.0	48.0	5.0	5	95.0	60.0	15.0	100.0	100.0	10.0	10.0	20.0	90.0

(90 per cent), with an average of 75 trees, and Guateque (100 per cent), with an average of 33 trees.

Fruit production (oranges, avocado pears) is in a period of decline, especially in the Manta area, because of lack of plant hygiene. The peasants still have not acquired the habit of fighting the diseases which attack fruit trees, and although there is already considerable anxiety over the problem, sufficient knowledge is lacking.

A beginning has been made in the control of diseases in potatoes, maize, broad beans, and kidney beans by applying insecticides and fungicides recommended in ACPO broadcasts or in STACA demonstrations.

In techniques of cultivation, the lowest percentage appears under the heading 'Pruning' through lack of knowledge on this subject.

The preservation of harvest is inadequate. The peasants do not do enough to combat the dangers of weevils, rats, and the damp, because they come up against technical or financial difficulties.

DOMESTIC PRODUCE

The incidence of kitchen gardening is highest in Manta (60 per cent) and lowest in Guateque (25 per cent) in spite of the fact that in the latter, STACA has inaugurated an educational campaign on the subject. The consumption of produce from the small domestic holdings is also highest in Manta (55 per cent).

After agriculture, poultry farming takes the highest place in the peasant economy. Manta is again highest on the list with an average of thirty-six birds per household. Sutatenza stands out with 40 per cent select species (Rhode Island, Plymouth Rock, New Hampshire) and 60 per cent native breeds. The reasons are the campaigns waged by the farming institutes of Sutatenza and ease of acquisition of select varieties

in the ACPO experimental farm. Manta lags behind in improvement of stock, with 90 per cent native breeds and 10 per cent select. Isolation and difficult roads are obstacles to this kind of campaign.

As for henhouses, construction of these in Sutatenza reaches 40 per cent; in Manta, 20 per cent; and in Guateque, 12 per cent. ACPO activity is encouraged by the influence of the farming institutes. The peasants, who are essentially realistic, *accept more readily those innovations which they themselves can appreciate as advantageous.*

On several farms in Sutatenza, henhouses of kiosk shape were found, different from those recommended by ACPO, less costly in construction (\$12) and perhaps more practical, as they have great advantages in shelter, protection, and hygiene. It was discovered, after making inquiries, that they were the idea of a local leader, a former pupil of the farming institute. He wanted to make a henhouse which would correspond to the necessary functions, and after several attempts, he discovered it by building one in the shape of a kiosk. The experiment was successful, and soon it was copied by the other peasants. At present, there are about forty henhouses of this type, proof that the innovation was well received and accepted by the people.

Domestic cattle-raising is best developed in Manta (90 per cent) with an average of two or three cows per family group. The cattle-raising industry is very popular, and the number of cows is higher than in other rural areas of the country.

Of the families questioned in Manta, 90 per cent consume milk every day. Sutatenza follows (40 per cent), then Guateque (25 per cent). From milk is derived the butter industry, improved by mechanical means (skimmers) in 30 per cent of households, which represents an appreciable advance in **family economy.**

Pig rearing constitutes another source of income for rural families. Nearly 100 per cent have pigs, with an average of

one or two per household. A hundred per cent are sold in the market. Pigsties are primitive in 95 per cent of cases and have no guarantees of hygiene. The sanitary installations of the best parish (Sutatenza) hardly reaches 50 per cent. Manta is far behind (5 per cent) through lack of practical demonstration in the houses themselves.

Beekeeping is carried on in only 10 per cent and 5 per cent of the farms in Sutatenza and Manta respectively. This campaign has not had the success desired by ACPO. Better results would be achieved if these campaigns were based on frequent courses in the villages, with a supply of beehives at reasonable prices in the villages themselves, as well as technical advice on production and utilization of honey. (See Table 16 for full details on domestic produce.)

It should be pointed out that in the parishes visited, there were no data on activities by the peasants to improve their standard of living as a result of the broadcasts by Radio Sutatenza. The priest and parochial representative send data directly to the central offices and do not leave copies in the villages. The people do not know the degree of improvement undergone each year in the various aspects of their life (accommodations, food, agriculture, cattle raising, and so forth). If the peasant could be informed in a graphic way of the improvement made year by year, comparison could be made with neighbouring villages, thus providing a permanent stimulus towards progress, and the rural community would know in figures what it had achieved and what remained to be done.

Table 16

Kitchen Gardening and Farm Animals (in Percentages)

Parish	Kitchen Gardens			Poultry							
	Have Kitchen Garden	Eat More than Sell	Sell More than Eat	Have Hens	Have Hen-house	Average Number of Birds*	Select Breeds	Native Breeds	Sanitary Care	Eat Eggs	Sell Eggs
Guateque	25	25	—	93	12	11	13	87	46	15	87
Sutatenza	40	35	5	100	40	27	40	60	85	80	95
Manta	60	55	5	100	20	36	10	90	65	100	100

Parish	Dairy Cattle			Pigs			Bees				
	Have Cattle	Stable	Sanitary Care	Daily Milk Consumption	Have Pigs	Pigsty	Sanitary Measures	Sell Pigs	Have Beehive	Extract Honey	Eat Honey
Guateque	46	—	42	25	100	81	37	100	—	—	—
Sutatenza	45	33	77	40	100	70	50	100	10	10	10
Manta	90	11	44	90	95	78	5	100	5	5	5

* Absolute number.

The Impact of Technology on Rural Activity

CHANGING VALUES

'The process of change includes significant alternations in the traditional forms of life (or in norms of behaviour) transmitted within a single generation or from one generation to the next by means of communication and social intercourse.'⁹ On the basis of this definition, we will study the changes brought about in the rural families which, in accordance with the plan, are subject to ACPO influence.

The acquisition of the ACPO radio receiver and interest in listening to its programmes marks the first step in the process of change. For the people of the rural settlements, radio was an exotic piece of equipment, invented to amuse people in the big villages and towns.¹⁰ They were never thought of as a method of spreading education, and the peasants never considered the possibility of having such a luxury in their own homes. On coming into contact with this agent of change, the narrow peasant minds opened up to wider horizons, and a desire for betterment was born in them, developed and crystallized in many works, which, although seemingly small, are the result of a continuous and effective process. Geographical isolation, which has kept the rural community

9. Orlando Fals Borda, *La Teoría y la Realidad del Cambio Socio-cultural en Colombia*, Bogotá, 1960.

10. In the diocese of Armenia, in the Quindío, owing to the economic prosperity resulting from the cultivation of coffee and ease of access to the markets and to the density of population, the use of radio has been general for several decades. When the ACPO campaigns arrived in the region, it was discovered that the vast majority of families living in the settlement already had commercial radio. This is one of the factors explaining why radio schools did not become popular in the Quindío.

deprived of the advances and transformations of the urban world, is being neutralized by ACPO's programmes and campaigns, because they educate and enable the peasant families to enjoy a more dignified, comfortable, and happy life.

As a result of this activity, the rural families have undergone changes in their scale of social values.

EFFECTS OF CHANGING VALUES

Literacy

Before the ACPO campaigns, the illiterate peasant lived comfortably with his ignorance, because nearly everyone else was the same. Now it is considered a reason for shame not to have these educational attributes. Anyone who can read and write now has a privileged place within the community.

Living Accommodation

The ACPO programmes have awakened in the peasants the desire to improve the structure of their houses in particular. The transformation that is taking place is amazing. Ten years ago, according to heads of families questioned, 98 per cent of their houses were of mud and straw. They did not possess the most minimal conveniences. Nowadays there are approximately only 30 per cent of this kind of hut left.

Questions of prestige affect acceptance of innovations introduced by families under the direct or indirect influence of ACPO. This is the case in a settlement in the Manta parish where there are no radio schools. Its exposed position on the sides of the mountain range enables it to observe the transformation of the houses in neighbouring settlements which have a good number of ACPO schools, and it has imitated the housing improvements as far as structure (walls, roofs, and floors) and external adornment (whitewashing and

cement paths) are concerned, in order to keep up the prestige of the community.

Technical Aids to Cultivation

The peasant, basically traditional, lays no value on technical aids to cultivation. From generation to generation, the exploitation of the land has been carried out with routine, inefficient methods. However, the campaigns carried out by ACPO and STACA have succeeded in overcoming the resistance of large numbers of peasants, who are already using rational methods to a greater or lesser extent.

Aspects of Technical Improvement

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|--|
| 1. Soil preservation | { | Sowing on mountain slopes
Using 'living fences' (hedges) |
| 2. Soil improvement | { | Compost heaps
Use of fertilizer
Use of lime |
| 3. Seeds | { | Selection of seeds
Disinfection of seeds
Disease control |

The irrational use of burning vegetation, so widespread in Colombia, has been abolished on farms under the influence of ACPO or STACA. People are beginning to realize the danger of this practice.

Little has been achieved in the use of new tools in agriculture. Except in some flat areas where modern machinery can be used, the majority of the peasants use shovels, axes, machetes, and primitive ploughs.

Livestock Improvement

The techniques taught by ACPO for the improvement of domestic livestock, poultry, pigs, and so forth have also led to a change in social values.

1. The rearing and exploitation of dairy cattle has resulted in better milk production, the introduction of mechanical skimmers, intensive cultivation of pasture and construction of hygienic stables.

2. The rearing and exploitation of poultry has enabled the peasants to acquire new techniques in the construction of poultry houses, in the selection of breeds, in the vaccination of hens, and in the use of poultry products for family consumption and also for income. The peasants, on being convinced that animals need shelter and protection against the weather, take care to provide them with adequate accommodation and preventive medicine. A leader of Sutatenza invented a simple and economic henhouse, and the adoption of this by many households is a case of positive evaluation on the part of the peasants.

3. Pig rearing, so widespread in the region, has brought about the practice of improved methods of exploitation. The construction of adequate pigsties and the provision of sanitary accommodation have brought new skills to the peasants. Often, farmers can be found in the settlements who know how to vaccinate and how to care for and build houses for the various farm animals.

CHANGE THROUGH CONTACT

In the parishes, two kinds of change through contact have come about – selective and directed. Change through selective contact occurs when members of external groups spontaneously and without ulterior design transmit new ideas which are perceived and adopted voluntarily by members of

the receiving group. Such people have freedom of selection, interpretation, and use of ideas picked up by chance contact.¹¹ The establishment of means of communication (roads, forest paths, and horsepaths), because it places rural families in contact with townfolk and with neighbouring villages, intensifies relations between groups and brings about favourable or unfavourable changes. The modernization of traditional clothes; the spread of the use of footwear, of cigarettes, of crockery, of aluminium pans, and of kitchen utensils; the popularization of grain mills and sewing machines – these are all examples of change. Young girls are becoming interested in learning dressmaking, and the number of rural dressmakers is increasing.

Change by directed contact is brought about by individuals who, automatically and as representatives of various institutions, consciously try to modify some local situation in order to attain determined ends which may be imposed or induced, violent or peaceful.¹² Directed contact is made through the ACPO, the church, schools, STACA, and the health centres and by their representatives: priests, parochial assistants, on-the-spot teaching assistants, teachers, agricultural advisers on house improvement, doctors, nurses, and other people considered to be agents of change.

INSTITUTIONS TO WHICH CHANGE CAN BE ATTRIBUTED

In general, we can say that all the institutions listed in Table 17 have contributed to some extent to the process of change. ACPO shows the highest percentages of assessment of effectiveness. It is obvious that assessment of effectiveness will depend on local organization. Manta, a well-organized parish, gives ACPO a 94.1 per cent assessment of effectiveness. Sutatenza, a fairly well-organized parish, gives 93.7 per cent,

11. Fals Borda, *op. cit.*

12. Fals Borda, *op. cit.*

Table 17

Assessment of Effectiveness (in Percentages)

Parish	Families Which have Under- gone Change	ACPO	Church	Parish	School	STACA	Health Centre	Other
Guatque	68.0	54.5	9.1	—	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1
Sutatenza	80.0	93.7	—	6.3	—	—	—	—
Manta	85.0	94.1	—	—	5.9	—	—	—

and Guatque, poorly-organized, shows only a 54.5 per cent estimation of effectiveness.

Institutions are considered effective according to the acceptance they have enjoyed within the peasant communities and the social changes which have arisen as a result of their continual activity.

Table 18

People to Whom Change Can Be Attributed (in Percentages of Greatest Effectiveness)

Parish	ACPO Representatives			Teachers	STACA Repre- sentatives	Health Centre Repre- sentatives	Others
	<i>Parish Priest</i>	<i>Teaching Assistant</i>	<i>Teaching Assistant</i>				
Guatque	36.3	36.4	—	—	9.1	18.2	—
Sutatenza	43.7	18.7	—	6.3	—	6.3	25.0
Manta	88.2	5.9	—	—	—	—	5.9

PEOPLE TO WHOM CHANGE CAN BE ATTRIBUTED

According to the sample, the people considered most effective in the processes of change are the priest and the parochial assistant. All the other agents of change are placed in a lower category (see Table 18). Once again we can see clearly how in the three kinds of parishes, the activity of the priest determines the degree of efficiency of the work in hand.

ACPO is a symbol of the priest and his assistant. The prestige enjoyed by the parish priest places him in a position of privilege in any catalytic role he may undertake.

CONFORMITY

We note a higher degree of conformity (100 per cent) in families living in badly-organized communities (Guateque). In the other kinds of parishes, conformity is 90 per cent (see Table 19).

Table 19

Reasons for Conformity (in Percentages)

Parish	Family	Cul- tural Inertia	Social and Cul- tural Sur- round- ings	Prop- erty	Educa- tion	Work	Ease of Com- muni- cation	ACPO
Guateque	100.0	12.5	25.0	56.3	—	—	6.2	—
Sutatenza	90.0	16.7	50.0	16.7	—	5.5	—	11.1
Manta	90.0	16.7	38.9	16.7	5.5	11.1	—	22.3

The social and cultural surroundings are the strongest cause of conformity among peasants. This is due to various reasons, such as the simplicity of their life, the cooperation

of neighbours in agricultural work, and the high degree of stability of the group. Children, even after they are married, continue to live in the same settlement. Relatives live nearby, and there are very close friendships between members of the group.

Property is also a very powerful reason for conformity. Attachment to the land and to the family and intensity of family feelings are an essential part of the love of the peasants for their little corner of land, for their work, and for their dwelling place.

NONCONFORMITY

Villages where the influence of ACPO has brought about more obvious changes have only 10 per cent nonconformity (see Table 20). Although this contribution by ACPO may seem very small, it is of great significance. Previously, the peasants lived more or less happily with the equilibrium of their way of life. The influence of ACPO has broken this equilibrium, and innovations have been accepted in the various aspects of family life. In Guateque, a poorly-organized parish, no dissatisfaction has been aroused yet among the rural groups, in spite of the presence of other agents of change. The social and family environment becomes the first

Table 20

Reasons for Nonconformity (in Percentages)

Parish	Families	Social and Family Environment	Property	Work	Isolation	Other Reasons
Guateque	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sutatenza	10	50	50	—	—	—
Manta	10	50	—	—	50	—

reason for dissatisfaction, followed by the lack of property and geographical isolation.

THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE

It is interesting to note that more than 80 per cent of the families accept the possibility of change by way of education (see Table 21). They base the highest percentage of their expectancies on the ACPO campaigns. It should be pointed out that Guateque (always in third place) is the first to recognize the possibility of change through the influence of ACPO. Perhaps the transformation brought about in better-organized parishes in the same region (Manta, Tibirita, Suta-tenza) has convinced the people of Guateque of the value of the work in hand.

The Religious Activities of the Radio Schools

ACPO is effecting the total re-education of the peasant. Its ideals and programmes were based on the concept of man as a physical and spiritual entity, for it provides a basic education and social and economic preparation for the basis of sound religious indoctrination.

The pastoral activity of the radio schools is effective in all the parishes where they function. For this they have:

1. A section for teaching the catechism, dependent on the ACPO department based in the capital of the Republic. This has the job of training the on-the-spot assistants for teaching the catechism; of providing publications and other material for the task, libraries for the education of such teachers, competitions and tests, radio programmes and distribution of the text of the catechism. It also attends to correspondence with

the parish priests and with the directors of offices about the subjects of this section.¹³

2. Parish representatives of ACPO:

- a. Priests (sermons, assistants' meetings, catechism).
- b. Parochial representatives (school inspection, distribution of materials).
- c. Parochial representatives trained in Sutatenza (catechisms). Each radio school is a religious centre.

3. ACPO receiver.

4. Classes in catechism and explanation of the gospel by the Sutatenza radio station (three hours a week).

5. Sunday programmes on the catechism and teaching of the Holy Bible in dramatic form.

6. Sutatenza peasant institutes. The chief aim of these is the apostolic training of lay readers, insuring their spiritual and cultural progress and giving them sufficient knowledge to be able to help the parish priest and their fellow peasants in bringing about a real campaign of enlightenment in the rural community.¹⁴

7. *El Campesino*, organ of information for ACPO, which has a whole page dedicated to the religious instruction of the peasants.

Pastoral work by means of the radio schools is least intensive in the type C parish and most intensive in types A and B, as Table 22 shows.

Conclusions on the Influence of the Radio Schools of ACPO on the Degree of Social Change in Rural Communities

ACPO has become a factor in social change by direct contact, and this social change is being brought about basically

13. See Ferrer Martín, *Escuelas Radiofónicas Rurales*, p. 24.

14. *ibid.*, p. 30.

Table 22

The Religious Activities of ACPO in the Three Types of Parish

Type A (Manta)	Type B (Sutatenza)	Type C (Guatque)
Sermons on festive occasions	Same	Same
Explanation of the Gospel on Sundays	Same	Same
Fortnightly meetings of on-the-spot assistants for instruction in Christian doctrine	Same	Monthly meetings of on-the-spot assistants for religious instruction
Organization of centres for teaching the catechism in all settlements where there are radio schools, under direction of on-the-spot assistants	Same	
Preparation of children for first communion	Same	Same
Explanation of the liturgy of Mass	Same	
Fortnightly visit of priest to settlements where there are radio schools, with celebration of Mass, explanation of the Gospel, and administering of sacraments	Participation of the students of the peasant institutes in parochial life in order to give them practical experience of the rural apostolate	
Construction of shrines in all settlements where the priest celebrates the Holy Offices	Monthly visits by parish priest to radio schools	
An average of 800 peasants read the ACPO newspaper weekly	600 peasants read the ACPO newspaper	300 peasants buy the ACPO newspaper

by a change in attitudes. The main attitudes that have changed are those towards technical progress and cultural progress.

The Colombian peasant, especially the small property-holder, is in general unfriendly towards change and progress. ACPO has introduced the desire for change and progress by a combination of theory and practice. The peasants are beginning to realize that improvement is possible and that today better horizons are opening up for them. However, the improvement made does not yet come up to the objective or subjective needs of the peasant. For example, the rural population now feels the need for personal contact with technicians (witness the kiosk henhouse).

Hence, there is an urgent need to harness any constructive and reformist tendencies to the technical and educational goals shown to the peasants. It is dangerous, for example, to launch a campaign of agrarian reform if a complete plan has not been prepared or if there is not a team of experts to guide the peasants on how best to proceed with their education in order to tackle the problems.

If the discrepancy between needs felt and the realization of them is not reduced at a satisfactory pace, discontentment with ACPO and the Catholic church could easily grow to encompass the whole government and all of society. This discontent could lead to a violent revolutionary situation, as often happens when perceived needs find no pacific outlet or hope of solution.

Apart from a change in values, there is a change in attitudes based on a change in meaning. ACPO, for example, has taken on a new meaning, that is, a symbol of the parish priest and the Catholic church. A change in the significance of the priest's work has also occurred. This is considered to be an effective factor in socio-economic change.

The basis for success in the introduction of change by ACPO does not reside solely in the prestige of the local parish priest or in the interest he takes. Even though he may

not deal efficiently with the radio schools, the organization still works. But where the priest does take an interest and gives himself wholly to the cause, the results are outstanding.

The system is in itself effective. It is an adequate response to a real problem – the scattered population. It follows as a logical consequence that a change in demographic distribution of the peasant population will make an impact on the organization of the radio schools and that an adaptation to the movements of the population will be necessary.

The growing process of urbanization of the Colombian population must be taken into account. It is estimated that by 1960, 33.7 per cent of the population already lived in urban nuclei of more than 10,000 inhabitants. For various reasons, the chief ones being rural violence and insecurity, the Colombian population is slowly concentrating in rural centres as an intermediate step towards a final move to the big cities. (There are already nine cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants.)

It is essential that the institution should maintain a permanent service of investigation, planning, and development and that it should employ the services of experts in demography and migration movements, as well as economists, so that campaigns should keep up to date with the economic, demographic, and social development of the country.

Total success depends on: (1) formation of a general plan in accordance with any national and regional plans in existence; (2) continuous evaluation of results obtained; (3) choice of the most modern methods, employing the most highly trained professionals, in order to attain the highest degree of efficiency; (4) scientific use of all means and of the rural communities by utilizing systems of community development which are already well-tested; and (5) cooperation with all governmental or non-governmental institutions, missions, and teams that, in one way or another, are carrying out programmes of urban improvement (the effectiveness of

programmes where ACPO, STACA, the health centre, the Agrarian Savings Bank, and the schools all worked together has been one of our greatest achievements).

The results obtained by ACPO are more evident in the peasants' mode of living than in the standard of living itself. This is because the work of ACPO has, in its first stage, been predominantly educational, with insufficient emphasis on structural reform. Hence, to improve present standards, it will be necessary for attention in the second stage to be concentrated on this kind of reform. The type and direction of such reforms will depend very much on how the present decade evolves.

8. The Crisis in the University*

It is indeed symptomatic that the problems of the National University are not taken into consideration by society, by the governing boards, by the administrators, by the professors, or even by the students themselves – except in times of crisis. This could show us that there is no continuous interest in making our university truly worthy of the name. The periodic crises are acute manifestations of chronic illness, an illness which must be diagnosed clearly if we are to find real solutions. Otherwise we will go on applying sedatives where surgery is required. We will go on believing that the punitive measures taken in the critical moments will substitute for regular pedagogical processes.

* [In June, 1962, a student strike at Bogotá's National University became violent when the government reacted by dismissing student leaders arbitrarily and by closing down the school. Torres sided openly with the students (and was asked to resign by his cardinal) and here explains why to a reporter from *El Espectador*; published in *El Espectador*, 24 June 1962. – Ed.]

That is the first great mistake, the one we are trying to trace to its origin. Why are the problems of the university not a constant concern?

Crises do serve a purpose and are therefore not at all to be despised. When these crises arise, problems become more conspicuous, easier to locate. To proceed in a precise and objective way, it will be necessary to carry out the most complete study possible on the different phenomena of the university. Doctor Robert Williamson of the faculty of sociology has begun with a general survey that will provide a basis for later probing. Even so, some of the causes are clear enough to identify now.

One obvious fact is that the students of our university have much more initiative than the professors and administrators. The demands the students make are usually (although not always) good. They demand justly, for example, that an incompetent professor be replaced, that the budget of the university be integrated, that an act of solidarity be carried out in protest against some injustice. Such student goals of social redress are usually neither attacked nor discussed by the public. They are not even known by the public. The things criticized by the public are the methods employed: violence, strikes, demonstrations.

If the objectives are often just but the methods err, why do the administrators not take the initiative in achieving these goals by more institutionalized and normal methods? This is another question that must be answered. Furthermore, even if what I have just said is accepted as fact, we could ask ourselves the following question: If the administrators and professors do not customarily concern themselves with the fundamental problems of the university, if they do not take the initiative to deal with these problems, then, when the students do it, why do they not try to channel the students' action by counselling them about methods which should be used?

Unfortunately, the picture which the students present in their meetings, in their assemblies, and in their demonstrations is that of a flock without shepherds; they are completely left alone to their fate, with their own criteria and with their own immaturity. When students meet to solve problems, the professors and administrators think that there is nothing for them to do. But later, when – abandoned by their professors – the students make immature decisions and carry out reproachable acts, professors and administrators point their implacable fingers to accuse those whom they believe guilty or those whom they consider troublemakers.

Why are there no professors to counsel the students in moments of crisis? Is that not when the students need them most? Perhaps the professors prefer not to involve themselves, not to commit themselves. We must, however, study the more profound causes.

In the above considerations we find a major problem. There is a lack of well enough qualified full-time administrative personnel who would work to solve the problems of the university, to inform themselves directly about those problems, and to stay in close contact with the students. To maintain sufficiently qualified administrative personnel, it is necessary to pay them well. Apostles are rare, and we cannot build a structure on the basis of these exceptions.

At present, because of budgetary inadequacies, it is difficult to offer sufficient remuneration. And the budget is inadequate not only in the amount but, more importantly, in the allocation of funds. Excessive, inefficient bureaucracy and even inefficient handling of expenditures prevent more of the budget from being paid for better-qualified administrators.

Even so, the calibre of professors and administrators does not depend on wages alone. They need to be chosen by more impartial and appropriate standards than those now used. Today we have recourse to reliable psychological tests for the

selection of personnel. More important, the possibilities of selection should extend to all Colombians, to all professionals. For this reason, national competition should be open to all those who want to be candidates for a vacancy on the faculty.

The formal structure of the university is important, but we know well that any legal statute can function in the hands of the right personnel and that the best statute can be misused by the wrong personnel. What is most important in a university statute is that it should permit impartial selection of functionaries and professors.

In the present charter of the university, the criteria of professional selection are predominantly subjective. Hence the great importance of the ruling group of each faculty. In the National University the appointment of professors, the approval of rules and of general curricula, and all the policies of each faculty depend on each governing board and each dean. The Academic Council is the real supreme authority. However, an authority divided among 24 deans lends itself to anarchy or arbitrariness. Only in matters of very special interest does the Council work as a team. An example of this is a budgetary meeting to defend the interests of each faculty or a meeting whenever someone's personal prestige is at stake because of interests outside the university. Then they readily make decisions without deliberation – decisions made only to please the public or the government or whatever other pressure group.

In each faculty, autonomy lies in the governing board (usually composed of a group of friends) whose members are elected by subjective rather than by objective criteria. The one exception is the student delegate, who breaks the homogeneity of the Council. This governing board acts according to a series of pressures. It would be interesting to make a study of the functioning of the ruling group in each faculty. That group is incapable of taking formal action against any

of its members or against any pressure group. It is an insecure group without a stability based on objective criteria of selection and promotion. It depends on persons and not on pre-established patterns. As an insecure group, it does not commit itself outright. Hence the lack of initiative. In many cases the administrators, off the record, incite the students to ask for reforms that they themselves do not otherwise dare carry out lest they compromise themselves. The life of the university is thwarted by the ruling group system, which favours the anarchy of student pressures on the level fundamental in the university – the level of each faculty.

The authority of the rector is mostly nominal. He does not even vote in the Academic Council or in the Conciliatura. His effectiveness depends on his personality. If his personality is not extraordinary, it is indeed dangerous for the prestige of the rectorate to be utilized by pressure groups defending interests outside the university. The actual power of the Conciliatura is limited to appointing the rector and to vetoing the appointments of professors when such appointments seem clearly undesirable.

With such an organization and with the administrative personnel and teaching staff that it presupposes, it is impossible for the university to function properly. The bureaucracy would have to be trimmed down, straight across the board. And it would be necessary for the organization and the methods of administration to be modernized. Funds of the university should be used to improve the salaries of principal administrators and of full-time professors and to increase the number of such professors.

To reform the statutes, it would be necessary to give the university true autonomy, freeing it from all outside influence. In view of the selfishness of pressure groups, the government of the university should depend only on the professors and the students. The authority of the rector and his staff should be sovereign in the executive and adminis-

trative functions. The collegiate bodies (deans, professors, and students) should act only as directed by rules. This is the only way to make the university function more smoothly.

Professors should all be elected by nationwide open competition, with the most objective standards of selection that can be established. With a reasonable budgetary increase, such a course would result in more highly qualified teachers and administrators. The rest will depend on the spirit of service, the expertise, and the teamwork of those who are able and willing to inaugurate a truly new era in the history of our university.

9. A Priest in the University*

The personality of the priest, like that of Christ, is difficult to understand. The mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of the divine within the human, the mystery of the elevation of the human to the supernatural order – these produce conflicts in the discursive mind of man. Man usually must separate the aspects of life to understand them. When considering one aspect, he at times overlooks others no less important.

The mission of the priest as such is exclusively supernatural. His life must be sustained by divine life and must be an instrument to transmit divine life:

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in the things pertaining to God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to have compassion on the ignorant and the erring, because he himself also is beset with weakness,

* [Published in *El Catolicismo* (Bogotá), 28 June 1962. – Ed.]

and by reason thereof is obliged to offer for sins, as on behalf of the people, so also for himself. (*Hebrews v, 1-3.*)¹

The priest should be in the world but not of the world. He should weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. He should carry out the Incarnation of the Lord by taking full responsibility for the human adventure of his flock.

Although his mission is specifically spiritual, he is commanded to preach charity: 'For the love of Christ impels us ...' (2 Corinthians v, 14). The form charity must assume depends on the needs of our fellow man. Therefore, bishops used to have temporal power as judges and princes. Therefore, the missionary must on occasion practise medicine. The law was made for man and not man for the law. In this sense the Lord said to the Pharisees:

Hypocrites! does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or ass from the manger, and lead it forth to water? And this woman, daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound, lo, for eighteen years, ought not she to be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath? (*Luke xiii, 15-16.*)

Therefore, many a priest must perform temporal functions in science or in education. In the latter field, called mixed dominion, his intervention is much more understandable. To be complete, even education in the temporal field should include the supernatural.

A priest in the university can at the same time be a professional. He can act as a professor and as a director of one of the academic organizations if his bishop considers that such a function would serve human needs. However, in this temporal role, although it obeys the commandment of charity, the reputation of the church is often involved for better or

1. [All references to the Bible in this translation of Torres's writings are taken from *New American Catholic Edition: The Holy Bible*, Douay-Confraternity trans., New York, Benziger, 1961. - Ed.]

worse. If the priest is impelled by charity, he cannot be mistaken in his motivation. He can indeed make mistakes in his temporal role. In his work and its results there can indeed be error.

If so, it does not fall to the priest, to the chaplain, to make the decisions for the religious order and from a comprehensive view. He can and must act according to his own conscience, in each case, in the field to which he is assigned. He can also have his own opinion about general aspects and the broader perspective. But he does not have the responsibility for them. That responsibility belongs to the bishop. Despite the human frustrations inherent in submitting to the will of another person, contrary to one's own judgement, there is a great peace in knowing that by doing so one is collaborating, by faith and by obedience, in building the kingdom of God.

It is sad to see how sharply the judgements of the world differ from the judgements of God. As Christians, people are not failures; there are no *aplanchadas*,¹ as we say in Colombia. There is a continuous movement of the Holy Spirit through the church. In this movement all is victorious – both failure and triumph, both approval (if it is received with humility) and disapproval (if it is received with faith):

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword? Even as it is written, 'For thy sake we are put to death all the day long. We are regarded as sheep for the slaughter.' But in all these things we overcome because of him who has loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (*Romans viii, 35-9.*)

In these last few days I have received from my archbishop orders that I should resign from the National University, where I was chaplain, but almost in name only. Two brothers of mine in the priesthood are full-time chaplains there. I taught a class in the faculty of sociology and was a member of its governing board. At the request of my bishop, since February I have been acting as Dean of the Institute of Social Administration of the Higher School of Public Administration, an autonomous governing entity under the direction of Dr Guillermo Nannetti. This position is full-time, and my connections with the University were quite minimal. I have now renounced those functions. My superior believed that I should resign. He could have demanded that I alter my attitudes and my conduct. He did not do so because he knew I was acting in good faith. He did not ask me to violate the dictates of my own conscience, and I appreciate that. When he requested that I resign for reasons it is not my responsibility to judge, he was making known his own criteria for university problems. Explicitly, he told me that he did not want the church to play the role that I considered right in this problem because, in his opinion, this could give rise to misunderstanding. I had already begun to play that role, however, and if the cardinal were to defend me, he would have to depart from the position he had chosen to adopt.

In discussing my resignation, I have said what I believe about the university. However, it would be deeply painful for me if my name were taken as a rallying cry for temporal fights. I have chosen to do what a priest should do now. I ran the risk of disagreeing with my superior. The greatest service that could be rendered me now would be to respect the obedience to which I committed myself when I decided to become a priest and which I would not accept now if it were not an integral part of what I consider my mission in the world.

10. Urbanization and Urban Reform*

I want to discuss only a few socio-economic aspects of urbanization and urban reform in Colombia. There are four principal topics: the concept of urbanization, the process of urbanization, urbanization and development, and urban reform. Although the first, the concept of urbanization, is a bit dull and theoretical, I believe that it is needed to form general criteria and to permit us to proceed to a socio-economic analysis.

There have been many general concepts of urbanization. Some people attempt to describe urbanization as a merely demographic process, that is to say, a concentration of human masses. Others have tried to define urbanization by identifying it with industrialization. The two phenomena are different: industrialization is a phenomenon which is predominantly, although not exclusively, economic, since it refers to a form of production and to a process of production. Luis Wirth, an urban sociologist, has tried to define urbanization according to three criteria: size of population, density of population, and heterogeneity of activity.

We find we have quite a large mass of population, which would satisfy the first demographic criterion. That great mass of population is concentrated in a geographical area proportionately small, satisfying the second criterion, density. And it is heterogeneous in the sense that this group of persons, together in a small area, have diversified activities.

* [Lecture delivered at the Seminar of University Groups, Medellín, 13-30 December 1962; published in the magazine *Ciencias Sociales* (Medellín), February 1964; also published in *Administración y Desarrollo* (Bogotá, Escuela Superior de Administración Pública, No. 4), 1964. - Ed.]

Another attempt to define the concept of urbanization was made by Redfield, who sees urbanization not as a phenomenon isolated from the rest of society or from the rest of the economic and cultural reality of the country or from the society concerned but rather as a wide range between two poles. He defines the two poles as two ideals. Ideal rural society (he calls it folk society) does not exist. Totally urban society does not exist either, or it exists as a combination of rural and urban. Some societies are nearer one pole and others nearer the other. Some are nearer the folk pole, that is to say, the pole which is usually called 'rural' but which Redfield called 'folk' because 'rural' relates only to the activity or to the locale, whereas 'folk' has other connotations – cultural and economic – not found in the concept of what is rural. Folk is a kind of primitive society. However, we find elements of this primitive society in the cities and in the most industrialized areas, so that many societies come much nearer this ideal kind of folk society and others more nearly approximate a classical urban kind. As I said, the very concept of economic equilibrium as such does not actually exist but rather is a standard, set by the economists, to show tendencies towards this equilibrium or tendencies away from it.

Redfield uses these two poles because the definitions of sociologists have until now usually been quite negative. What is urban society? What is urbanization? They reply: Urban society is everything that is not rural society. And what is rural society? Everything that is not urban society. Then we are back where we started. In other words, when we speak of a great mass of population, that great mass must always refer to density, because if what matters is numbers, even the nomadic people, who are completely without any criterion of urbanization, could fall within the concept of size by numbers.

An urban society would be one that has a very great density. But what is density? With respect to what? With

respect to the rural areas. Luis Wirth speaks of heterogeneity of the city. Heterogeneity compared to what? Compared to the rural areas, which are greatly homogeneous as far as functions are concerned. Then the definition is always a rather negative one. Urban is what is not rural, and rural is what is not urban.

In a more intelligent way, therefore, Redfield establishes that between these two poles, the folk pole and the urban pole, there is a range. Many societies are closer to the folk, and many are closer to the urban. He gives characteristics of folk society. The folk society is a small society, homogeneous in its functions, generally isolated, generally illiterate, possessing strong group solidarity, a coherent culture, and traditional conduct which is spontaneous – without self-criticism, more personal than functional. There are no intellectual goals as such, and the importance of the family or clan or kinfolk is very great. Consequently, the family is the unit of action. The religious prevails over the secular. Autonomous economy is based on consumption and not on marketing.

The urban pole is a heterogeneous society in good communication with the rest of the country, where there is less illiteracy, that is to say, a society where there is formal education. There is very little group solidarity, an incoherent culture, a conduct not traditional but in constant change, formality instead of spontaneity, criticism and impersonality, and intellectual and rational goals. Family ties lose their social functions; the family is not the unit of action. There is a prevalence of the secular over the religious, and the economy is one of marketing, not of consumption. To test these criteria, I would like for us to turn to four classical sociologists who have concepts about the characteristics of societies: Weber, Tonnies, Durkheim and Copley – two Germans, a Frenchman, and an American.

The concept of Weber is *Gemeinschaft* or *Gesellschaft*,

translated as 'society' or 'community'. He says that society is based on rational goals and community is based more on traditionalism and sentimental ties. By this definition, the folk society would be more nearly a community, the urban would be more nearly a society. This division of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (society and community) has been attributed much more to Tonnies, but the one who originally made the distinction was Weber. Tonnies refers instead to societies made by *Kur Wolle* and *Wense Wille*. *Kur Wolle* societies are deliberately created by premeditation, while *Wense Wille* societies are those created by a more natural, more spontaneous process. We could say that the folk society is a spontaneous society and that the urban society involves premeditated decisions.

Durkheim also made an interesting distinction between mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. He says that mechanical solidarity comes from the equality of functions: 'We farmers are all loyal to each other.' In such a case, few functions are necessary, and these few are exercised by few persons. On the other hand, organic solidarity demands complementary roles. It is called organic, indeed, because many functions are exercised by many persons; they are spread out but complementary. Such solidarity is achieved not by doing the same thing but rather by complementing each other; because one person needs another, each is incomplete.

Then we could say that folk society has a more mechanical solidarity and urban society is more organic. With these historical-theoretical propositions in mind, I would like for us to make a tentative definition of urbanization. Urbanization above all is a process. First I will give you a broad and complex definition, a definition that frankly – although I have tried to work on it for three or four years – is not sufficiently perfected. Hence, it is so long.

Urbanization is a process by which masses of population are concentrated with a great division of human activity.

The tertiary and secondary activities are far more important than the primary. There is a far greater number of people in the secondary activities than in the primary, but all share the common costs of services.

Let me try to explain all this. In the first place, urbanization is a process. It cannot be conceived of as static; it is, rather, something in formation. As masses of population concentrate, the element of density appears. Here is what I consider (of course, subject to discussion) to be the essential cause of the creation of cities: a great division of human activity. Economic and social progress create new needs. To meet these new needs, people must specialize because each individual cannot engage in all the activities to provide for his own needs. Upon specializing, a society becomes technological – more capable of progress and efficiency.

Hence the need to live near each other in order to complement each other in this division of labour. Therefore, cities are created to be able to take maximum advantage of the division of labour and to be able, thus, from the geographical point of view, to progress together.

Furthermore, there is a predominance of the tertiary activities, that is, the services – commerce, administration, education, transportation, personal services – and of the secondary activities, that is, processes of manufacturing and industry. Both secondary and tertiary activities are sometimes taken to be the characteristics of the city. As we said at the beginning, one associates industry with urbanization, but the most typical aspect of urban society is the third sector, not the second, because one finds industries in isolated places, industrial centres that are not cities. Above all, one finds these industrial centres in the Soviet Union and in the United States. For a city to be a city, what is essential is the tertiary activities: administration, commerce, education, and anything else that is service.

All this is relative because there is also, at times, primary

activity in the city. In many cities we cannot say that agriculture is totally excluded. Nor mining. Nor hunting and fishing. Agriculture is found above all in those small orchards and gardens that are not very important economically (but are much more important than we sometimes believe) but are important because of the social role of the person.

We have said that the tertiary and secondary activities predominate and that there is a greater proportion of secondary activities than primary. Secondary groups are those based on formal relations, on relations that have more to do with the function of the person than with the person himself. In a village we hear such remarks as 'I am going to Don Tomás to send a telegram.' One knows that Don Tomás is the telegraph operator, the friend who smokes cigarettes and drinks beer on Saturday. Don Tomás is an institution and is the telegraph operator. In the city nobody speaks of Don Tomás but of 'the telegraph operator' because relations are very superficial, very transitory. Primary groups are those groups in which relations are much more intense, much more frequent, much more intimate. The family is a primary group. Groups in recreation are primary groups. Groups of neighbours are primary groups. Unions, corporations, and businesses are secondary groups that establish superficial relations much more according to the function of the person than according to the person himself.

Therefore, in the city there is a greater number of secondary groups than of primary groups. People are brought together because of economic factors. It is important to think about sharing common services. It is much cheaper to have one aqueduct for a million people than ten aqueducts, each serving a hundred thousand people. In other words, if the basic cost is shared among the greater number of people, the aqueduct will be more economical to the degree determined by what the economists call the law of increasing returns. The more a company grows – or the city in this case – the

greater the number of people sharing the common costs. Therefore, big cities are economical.

But there comes a time when industry grows as fast as the city, resulting in counterproduction which begins to lower the returns. The same thing happens from the social viewpoint. When the city becomes very big, a law of diminishing returns begins to reduce the economy achieved by concentration. Of course, this depends on the region, the city, the administration, and a number of other factors. Therefore, we cannot establish a general norm as to what size a city should be, whether one million inhabitants or twelve million like New York. In each case, what must be done about resources, transportation, and administration is to find out how much each city should grow to be economical.

In the process of urbanization itself, if the division of human activity proves to be an independent variable, after neutralizing the various variables, we can say that urbanization began when the first nomadic people settled down (if the first people were indeed nomads, which is not yet completely proved but can be assumed here for descriptive and graphic illustration). The process of urbanization began with the division of work among those who, on one hand, tended the cattle and hunted and fished and those who, on the other hand, cultivated the land, an occupation making it necessary to **stay in one place**.

Then work activity was developed a little more. Manufacturing was introduced since persons who were settled in one place needed to be provided with clothing, shoes, and tools. A subsistence industry began and was followed by tertiary activities of commerce, transportation, and administration. Next came the subdivisions.

All of these primary, secondary, and tertiary activities have subdivisions. The individual who does not know how to make anything but, say, shoes, needs a person to till the soil for him, to make his clothing, to educate him. Thereby, this

division of labour begins to create the cities and begins to cause great concentration of people. Therefore, I believe that it is no coincidence that in the earliest times there were no great cities. All the cities, such as Memphis, Thebes, and Athens, were relatively small in comparison to the general population. This was because the division of work is naturally both cause and effect of socio-economic development.

With this socio-economic development comes a very great increase of the urban population. I have here a table of percentages of population in cities of more than a hundred thousand inhabitants. Unfortunately, the figures are for 1950, but I did not find more recent ones for the whole world. Thirteen per cent of the world population lives in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants. In North America, 29 per cent live in cities; in Oceania, 41 per cent; in Europe, 21 per cent; in the Soviet Union, 18 per cent; in South America, 18 per cent; in Central America and the Caribbean countries, 12 per cent; in Asia, 8 per cent; and in Africa, 6 per cent.

There is a close correlation between economic development and urbanization. The rural population in Colombia was estimated as 60 per cent in 1951. Today, as Doctor Machado said, it is more or less 53 per cent, urban population being 47 per cent. However, from the sociological point of view, we must view these figures with certain reservations, because, in this calculation, any centre with more than 5,000 inhabitants was taken to be an urban centre. However, from the sociological standpoint of folk society, there are cities of much more than 5,000 people in which the inhabitants have totally rural activities and live only from the land. Even such a regional capital as the one I visited not long ago, Lórica, can be said to be a totally rural city, or a totally rural area, since everybody there lives from the land and all other activity is purely accessory. So actually, we cannot hold ourselves so strictly to these statistics. In Colombia, I believe, it is much more significant that there are ten cities

of more than 100,000 inhabitants, that we have a total of perhaps two and a half million people – about 30 per cent of our national population – with an urban style of life. Whether or not they have urban habits is more important than the size of the population. It seems to me that judging only from the size of a city is, from a sociological point of view, not enough.

Now, what is the phenomenon that determines this urban growth? It is not birth rate. We know that birth rate in the cities is much lower than birth rate in the rural areas and that at times there is a natural decline, that is, a decrease of the population from the standpoint of natural growth compensating birth rate with mortality. Hence, the great factor of urban development is migration of the rural people to the city. In Bogotá we find that 60 per cent of the inhabitants were born elsewhere. Today it is very important to recognize and study the factors of migration – the factors that drive rural inhabitants from the rural areas and the factors that attract them to the city. In both, I would like to consider economic factors, social factors, and political factors, since this phenomenon of migration from the rural areas to the city is so important for urbanization.

There are economic phenomena that drive the rural inhabitants out of the rural areas. I would like to divide them into phenomena related to property and those related to income. When we consider property, we know that the immense majority of the Colombian population is made up of small landowners or of those who own no land. Property is not elastic: we can increase the dimensions of an industrial enterprise by increasing machinery or by building plants, but we cannot increase the land. The most that we can do is develop agriculture technologically, but there is a limit to that. We cannot develop more land than we have. For the small landowners, subdivision of the land among their children means dividing misery, as I have said. Dividing

among ten children a ten-hectare plot gives one hectare to each of the children. Each of them can no longer live from it, and if each of them has, in turn, ten more children, that would make one-tenth of a hectare for each. The problems of property ownership drive people to migrate, to look for something other than landowning.

In the rural areas income is derived either from property ownership or – in the case of those who own no land – from day labour. The profits of property are very meagre, partly because of the agricultural methods employed; farming is carried out on deep slopes, while cattle graze on land suitable for agriculture. Besides, as we will see, there is no true market-oriented agriculture but rather subsistence farming, with no one to sell farm products to. Transportation is lacking, rational farming nonexistent, productivity inadequate. In sum, there is no low-cost productivity. Hence, because of these economic factors, the small landowners live in really wretched conditions.

Day labourers' costs in rural areas are lower only for agricultural products, products that, in general, rural inhabitants do not have to buy at all, or, at most, on a small scale. What they do have to buy are manufactured goods, their clothing, and a large part of their household items. They have some expenses for transportation. And all their other expenditures, except for food, are for items that come from the city at costs higher than those charged in the city. Therefore, the real salary, that is to say, the salary compared to the cost of living (not the nominal salary which is the money received or the gross income), is lower in the rural areas than in the city. Another factor that drives people to the city is, therefore, their awareness that they would earn more there. This is a social factor, but the fact that salaries actually are higher in the city is an economic factor.

Among the social factors that drive them from the rural areas are the lacks of public services, health services, educa-

tional facilities, transportation, administration, and recreation. Recreation is very important because of the monotony of living in the rural areas. Much less than in other countries can an underdeveloped country extend its services to places where they are going to be enjoyed by only a few.

Because of the lack of social mobility, the rural inhabitants have few opportunities. The homogeneity of activities makes one who has been a farmer all his life remain a farmer; at least, although it need not be so, he believes he must. This constitutes a psychological and sociological barrier to social progress. Another aspect is the inferiority complex. In general, the peasant feels inferior to the city dweller. If a peasant travels to the city, studies in the city, or has relatives in the city, he is more highly esteemed. An inferiority complex makes him go from the rural area to the city.

Furthermore, in very small societies and in traditional societies, with cultural patterns which are more or less traditional and sentimental, there is a rather irrational and very severe social control. This control is exerted on the individual by the family and by the neighbourhood, making him conform to very strict patterns he has not personally assimilated. If he does not go to church, his family knows it, the whole neighbourhood knows it, everybody knows it. If he gets drunk, everybody knows it. Hence, a very strict and not very rational social control is imposed upon him. The individual seeks to escape this social control by going to the city.

The city offers not only a greater number of opportunities in politics but also a chance for a greater degree of participation in the government and for access to information on national events. Another political consideration is the factor of *la violencia*, which makes the individual leave the rural area to look for safety in the city.

In the city, property ownership is not so important. Prestige assumes a number of forms, not strictly linked to property ownership, to renting, or to status as tenant. Now-

adays holding stock in companies is a much more elastic kind of property ownership. The fact of owning something, land or property, is not so important or necessary in the cities, as Pope John XXIII said in his encyclical *Mater et magistra*. The concept of property has evolved so much that now, for many people, it is more important to be educated than to own property.

Investments are more productive in industry. We must accept that capital gains are greater from investments of an industrial and urban nature than from agriculture. Factors of social security also bring peasants to the city, the security of better education for the future and better legal services. Contracts are better kept. Social benefits, living allowances, and subsidies are more frequent in the city than in the rural areas. In the city there are better educational facilities and a certain amount of social security. Sometimes the security of a future retirement income means more than a little parcel of land that can be divided among children.

From the psycho-social point of view, the services we mention are more economical, more numerous. Opportunities are greater, more varied. There is a certain urban mirage that is a purely social factor. That is to say, there is the fascination of the city. Especially in underdeveloped countries, the contrast between a feudal or pre-feudal system, as is found in many rural areas of Colombia, and the totally modern system, seen in the Colombian and other Latin-American cities, is much greater than in developed countries. So, if even in developed countries the city is this kind of mirage, it is much more so where the contrast is greater.

Then, of course, there is the question of freedom. Since the Middle Ages, the city has traditionally offered more freedom in its fewer social controls. This very fact leads people to the city, where they get lost in a more or less anonymous mass. They associate with other people there on a more or less voluntary basis, as Dr Machado said, more deliberate

and less imposed. At times, of course, a certain pressure is exerted by the milieu, and thereby certain pressures from the society are felt, but much fewer than in the rural areas.

In the city there is greater opportunity for political activity. Leaders and *gamonales*¹ are less imposed from above – a social aspect applied to politics.

How is urbanization related to urban development?

When we used to hear Redfield's description of urban and rural society, which we complemented with the opinion of other sociologists about folk society, it sounded like a description of an underdeveloped society. Development takes place more by change of all the structures than by indexes. In general, development has been described as a series of indexes: of illiteracy, of capital formation, of population growth, of mortality rate. These indexes are only symptoms, only the outer manifestations of something more profound in the structure itself.

There is no doubt that after the Second World War, West Germany had the indexes of an underdeveloped country – little capital and no industry. Yet we cannot say that Germany was an underdeveloped country. Why? Because it had the structure of a developed country. Therefore, I would like to make a rapid analysis of the structures of development. But I would like to do this in relation to urbanization. I speak of those structures of underdevelopment that can influence or be influenced by urbanization.

In the first place, the general structure of values is very important to many of our problems, including the problem of land reform and the problem of long-range planning. People never believe that it is necessary to take into consideration the value system of other people when they plan. I believe that one of the great things that took place in Cuba

1. [In Latin America, *gamonales* refer to political machines or their chiefs, or simply the traditional chieftain at local level. – Ed.]

and in the Soviet Union – or even in Puerto Rico or in the Philippines lately – is that they gained the mystique of development.

And what does it mean to have the mystique of development? It means that social values are changed, whether from a communist revolution or from a nationalist revolution, as in Egypt or, to a large extent, in the Soviet Union itself. What is most important in these revolutions, I believe, is that they change the value structure. All the means of propaganda and all the government programmes are adapted to this national mystique. The same is true for the mystique of the land reform. When land reform is attempted in the absence of this mystique, it is very difficult for long-range planning to be carried out. Planning is important for economic development and at times is a by-product of that very development. In our countries planning sometimes is artificial because it is attempted by young economists who have studied outside the country and whom nobody in the lower bureaucratic or technocratic levels understands. Even if the young economists were understood, no attention would be paid to them because they are believed to be talking nonsense. As long as a mystique for planning does not begin in grade school, does not continue through all levels of schooling, and does not revolutionize values, planning programmes cannot be put into effect.

Although we Christians are not in favour of the warped structure created by capitalism, we must note that there can be no progress without a high criterion of efficiency and productivity. This criterion may become noxious if human values and Christian principles are sacrificed, as has occurred in capitalism, but in itself the high criterion of efficiency and productivity is desirable. We must learn to drop our preference for the most comfortable, the most pleasant, the simplest way to do things; we must get over our deep-rooted individualism and move towards efficiency. We must surpass capi-

talism in productivity, not as individuals but rather as a society.

Also the concept of evaluation – which is very closely linked to that of productivity and planning – must be included here among the values that nobody wants to consider. After all, this sentiment (called self-criticism by Marxists) has been present among Christians since the first days of the church. A personal self-criticism, which we call ‘soul searching’ and which must be applied to all institutions and all activities, is also one of the criteria for national development.

The criteria of welfare and social security are also indispensable for development: that is to say, the majorities, not the minorities, must be taken into account. And so the whole man, the social being – not just his purely material needs. Institutional structures are more or less a reflection of value structures. Institutions must be planned, must be efficient and functional, must be evaluated and corrected, and must regard man as an end, not as a means to an end.

But as I have seen here now, the matter of industrialization is not going to be touched upon sufficiently in the subjects of this seminar, and therefore I want to extend myself a little further.

It is important that we go from a subsistence economy to a market economy. Instead of exporting the product of a one-crop agriculture, it is important that we diversify our export products and that we become industrialized. To attain a market-oriented economy, there must be a real demand for production. One of the things Professor Currie² emphasized which has not been taken sufficiently into account by those who are not economists is that what is needed is not a potential demand for a product but a real demand. They say: Here,

2. [Director of Operación Colombia, which has also been called the Misión Currie (Currie Mission), in the 1950s in Colombia. (See John Gerassi, *The Great Fear in Latin America*, New York, Macmillan, 1965, pp. 327–9 and Appendix D.) – Ed.]

a great deal more can be produced in agriculture, and it will be consumed. Why? Because the Colombian people are undernourished. They look at the studies of the FAO. They look at the consumption of protein. Yes, all that is true. But after all, what the economists say is not that there is a lack of food but a lack of money. In other words, potential demand exists, but effective money demand does not exist. Genuine demand must come from the other peasants, from the urban centres, or from outside the country.

Among what peasants can there be genuine demand? In general, among those of different climates, because the peasants can produce for themselves whatever grows in their own climate. Genuine demand among the peasants requires something on the part of the producer – high productivity with lower prices. There must be transportation. There must be long range planning of the market. None of that exists now. Furthermore, in order to have purchasing power, the other peasants also must have a market for their own goods, an economic plan, and low costs of production to be able to make a profit on their products. So we have a vicious circle.

I believe that genuine demand is not going to come from other peasants. Genuine demand can come from urban centres, but then what is needed? At least there must be transportation facilities. If the urban inhabitants have money, they can buy, even though the costs of production remain high and prices are high. But what is the problem? The urban inhabitants do not have money either, because there is not enough industrialization. Therefore, if we are only going to encourage migration from the rural areas to the city without parallel industrialization, what we are going to create is an urban proletariat, unable to consume the agricultural products. Moreover, we cannot export agricultural products extensively to the foreign market because we cannot compete. The international market is closed to us.

Here there has been much talk of a deficit market, that is,

of what is lacking in the international market, of what is not saturated. There has been much talk of meat, of cattle of all kinds. It is not a matter of what is lacking but rather in what can we compete. Competition in the meat market seems doubtful because cattle breeding and meat packing involve technology. Although there is a shortage of meat, we would have to sell at such low prices that until our cattle industry is up to date, we could probably not compete. We must look for those markets in which we can compete – above all, in tropical agricultural products. Here, too, technology is needed and prices must be lowered.

Furthermore, what manufactured products of ours are other urban inhabitants going to consume? If we do not increase purchasing power, the acquisitive capacity of the worker, we will not be able to find a market among other urban inhabitants. We rural inhabitants see that if no substantial investments are made to develop agriculture technologically, there will be no acquisitive capacity, no purchasing by other urban inhabitants. Competition on the foreign market is much more difficult. I believe that except in countries less industrialized than we are, it is going to be very difficult to find a competitive market for our manufactured products. That would be possible in a Latin-American common market, but it seems to me that the common market is still quite a distant dream.³

What conditions are necessary in order to create a market economy? I believe there are two. One is an investment policy. The second is technology. A policy of investments requires transportation, irrigation, and projects to locate sources of electrical energy. Investments must also be made in machinery. These would be private investments, although,

3. [Camilo Torres's dream of a common market had nothing to do with the one now enforced which favours mostly the products assembled in Latin America but owned and manufactured by North American enterprises. – Ed.]

unfortunately, as we know, either capital gains will be exported or the profits will be spent on non-productive goods, luxury goods; this is one of the most serious problems for an underdeveloped country. Therefore, it would be important for us to succeed in orienting investments not towards consumer goods but towards production goods and to provide long-term credit under favourable conditions. So much for the matter of investments.

We see that it is necessary to develop agriculture technologically and to provide technology to the urban inhabitants. I believe that the big mistake made by Operación Colombia⁴ was to consider that the investment policy for the urban area can be made by a simple decision as if we were in a dictatorship and as if many pressure groups were not going to place obstacles in the way of all this. We have a great investment in the public order. There are a great number of factors. We cannot arbitrarily concentrate all the investments in housing first and then go on to the industries that produce consumer goods to ask them to employ and give purchasing power to the recently migrated people. I believe that the investment policy fails to take into consideration the lack of technological skills and general culture of the rural immigrants. They cannot overcome these handicaps simply by moving to the city. If, through land reform, we can give the peasant an enterprising mentality, enabling him to think in terms of today's technology, to plan ahead, and to aim for his own social welfare, then we will succeed in preparing him for the next stage – more rational concentration in the cities.

Also, it is quite utopian to try to modernize and intensify agriculture by a legal decision. The important thing to do is proceed gradually towards technological farming, leaving the marginal lands aside and, little by little, concentrating agriculture on the most productive land.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that there is no develop-

4. [See Gerassi, *loc. cit.* – Ed.]

ment without industrialization. Why? Because, in the first place, industrialization builds up the national work force by paying wages higher than those received in the primary sector and even in the tertiary sector in the underdeveloped countries. The higher the wages, the greater the distribution of national income obtained by the manpower occupied in the secondary sector. So by industrialization, instead of paying North American and other foreign workers for all the manufactured products, we will be paying Colombian workers. Also the productivity of the industrial companies is much greater than the production of the agricultural enterprises. So there can be no real development without industrialization.

Now, in view of all this, how does industrialization contribute to urbanization? With regard to the value structure, we saw how urban society places the national standard above the sentimental and traditional standard. Then comes the criterion of technological productivity, much more easily developed in an urban society than in a rural society. The diversification of functions leads to competition much more feasibly in the city because of the geographical proximity of the demanding groups. When we arrive in a great city and see that everybody dashes about, that everybody speaks in a shrill voice, that everybody drives himself, it is simply because of the atmosphere. Whoever does not compete or try to compete does not survive.

Mr Currie mentions a problem that can be solved only with urbanization: urban inhabitants are the normal consumers of the agricultural producers. As long as there are many non-consumers who produce for their own needs, agricultural production is not going to have a great enough outlet. The only way to create consumers who do not produce for their own needs and who constitute a real demand is by industrializing the urban inhabitants. These facts are irrefutable. It is quite something else to ask how it is going to be done.

Is it going to be done in two years? And can it be done in two years, as Mr Currie proposes?

Many speakers here have mentioned that by foresight we can avoid making the mistake of great urban concentrations. This would be easy in a country already urbanized and industrialized, where the role of industrialization is beginning to decrease little by little. In the United States we already find factories far from the urban areas. We find such industrial centres because transportation is easy. To complement each other, the various functions of men no longer demand geographical proximity because human communications, as well as material communications, have been facilitated by technology.

It will be very difficult, however, for us to attain real industrialization without urbanization. I believe that joint ownership of the means of production, the sharing of services, and the sharing of costs of those services demand that for the time being we should think in terms of urbanization. It is like attempting Operación Colombia without a previous land reform. We cannot skip over certain stages. Skipping over these stages implies investments that underdeveloped countries cannot possibly make. In other words, to overcome underdevelopment, it is necessary to put into effect programmes which can be carried out only by developed countries.

Urbanization affects the social structure by creating a middle class, which, after all, is what will determine our process of development. The official limit and aim of this process is the creation of a cultural, political, and economic middle class. Why? Because the lack of a powerful middle class means that the national income is badly distributed. But will urbanization create this middle class? Urbanization based on long-range planning and the control of markets, of investments, and, therefore, of job opportunities is going to permit a greater income for persons who stay in the rural areas because

they will be able to sell to the city people, who will have more money for the agricultural products they need. Then, little by little, the rural people are going to rise economically.

We know that in the underdeveloped countries the cultural factor is very dependent upon the economic factor. When economic conditions are improved, more schools can be built and more people develop their culture. From the administrative viewpoint, we know that cultural and economic factors are very influential, and we know that gradually as urban values increase so do developmental values. In addition, the social structure also will undergo a transformation if we attain a more rational urbanization. But for this we need an urban reform. We do not have to consider this urban reform as a reform simply in the matter of housing, with urban reform taken to mean that everybody should own his own home, as many conceive of the land reform meaning that everybody should have a parcel of land. These criteria are very simplistic.

After all, urban reform consists of planning urbanization on technical bases, social bases, human bases, and investment bases. For this the land reform can help in part, by giving greater economic capacity to the persons who are going to acquire land. Unfortunately, we do not have strict laws requiring that these investments be made all over the country or that they be made for factories which increase overall production. If we had such laws it would be much easier. Nevertheless, investments in the urban area are generally considered more desirable than in the rural area because of what we have already mentioned—the social principle by which attraction to the city is felt not only by the urban-dwelling peasant but also by the landowners. Then it is possible that with such laws we could achieve an investment policy for the city: investments controlled by taxes and by other legislation could be channelled to productive industries rather than to simple industries that manufacture consumer goods. Of

course, it will be quite difficult to succeed in getting these investments earmarked for heavy industry. What is more, it will be necessary to contemplate seriously the technical training of the people.

This is a great undertaking, but we know now that we are very short of technicians. We have an unskilled labour force which eagerly grabs at whatever salaries it can get. This makes the situation still more difficult for the people who come to the city from the rural areas; on the other hand, we have a shortage of qualified manpower. For 1954, for normal industrial development, we needed to be able to train 12,000 qualified workers annually. The industrial circles were turning out 1,000. Now in the SENA it has been possible to train about 5,000 to 6,000 qualified workers annually, an effort which is gigantic and very effective but still leaves us with a 50 per cent deficit.

As can be observed, for urban reform conceived in this way, the next thing we urgently need, after an investment policy, is technical training of our workers. Finally, some measures must be taken against what Dr Machado was talking about – getting rich through speculation. It is a terrible phenomenon of our cities. One of the inflexible factors in the real estate market and in the urbanization process is that of the land itself, the land where building is going to take place. There is an enormous demand for this land. The law of supply and demand makes it much more profitable to let land lie fallow, multiplying in value around the cities, rather than to make social use of it, as Dr Machado said. Then what happens? If society does not intervene, individual proprietors keep land values multiplying, raising the cost of housing not only there but in general.

Urbanization is held back because land speculation produces explosions of improvised squatters' huts. We know that these social forces, when they are not channelled normally, are the beginning of a revolution, about which we spoke once

in La Capilla. When normal channels for development are not opened, this social force surges into abnormal channels. When there is no planned urbanization and urban extension, it is logical for these squatters' camps to appear.

In the squatters' camps the land is not paid for but is simply taken. The remedy for all these invasions is to call a halt to the skyrocketing of land values in order to permit normal urbanization. In the present situation urbanization is held back by the rigidity of the land market. It should be possible to formulate a government policy like that of social welfare, 'by fair standards' as stated in the National Constitution, to expropriate even without the 'fair' compensation. From the Christian point of view, in this case, the common good of the people demands expropriation, and it can be carried out even without compensation.

I would like simply to state four conclusions. First, we cannot separate urbanization from socio-economic development. We must succeed in urbanizing our country. Second, for this urbanization to be the best course to follow, it must be a coordinated urbanization, accompanied by an investment policy. Third, for it to be successful, we need an educational programme to train workers and qualify them for employment in technology. And fourth, effective new legislation is needed. Unfortunately, like land reform, urbanization will be subject to many pressure groups if we are not able, both as Christians and as young people – as university students – to organize other pressure groups that favour reform-oriented goals of social welfare.

II. Social Change and Rural Violence in Colombia*

Introduction for the Layman

Like all the other rudiments of human knowledge, science is an ambivalent asset. It permits greater depth and greater substance in communications with those who are instructed in it. But in communication with those who are not – whether because they follow other pursuits or because they lack scientific background – science can be an instrument of separation, of misunderstanding, and, hence, of conflict.

The author of the present study is a priest who is also a sociologist. It would be interesting to explain in detail how these two activities are related and how the sacred and the secular differ in themselves and in their respective applications. To focus well on this problem, we should examine thoroughly the psychological, sociological, and historical implications of the Incarnation of God and all the consequences therefrom. However, these considerations do not fall within the main purposes of this introduction.

In order for me to serve as liaison between my colleagues who are priests and those who are sociologists, I believe that it will suffice for me to make a few brief remarks about the difference between the normative and the positive.

Essentially inductive, positive science begins with empirical observation to arrive at generalizations of first degree abstractions which give us a metaphysical truth in the third

* [Published in *Asociación Colombiana de Sociología: Memoria del Primer Congreso Nacional de Sociología*, Bogotá, Editorial Iquicema, 1963. – Ed.]

degree of abstraction. Positive science is based on the changeless essence of human life. The normative sciences, such as morality, politics, and law, must have a metaphysical basis. Positive sciences test facts, make logical generalizations, and submit those generalizations to empirical verification in order to correct, enlarge upon, or – if appropriate – discard them.

This study presumes to be a work of positive sociology. As I will explain further on, it is not fundamentally reinforced by field analysis. In order to formulate a series of working hypotheses, I have relied on direct experiences borrowed from other sources and on my unconfirmed observations.

From the methodological and scientific points of view, this process is incomplete but not erroneous. As I have said above, positive science must be based fundamentally on empirical observations (if these are well enough developed, as they are in sociology). However, observations must be related to a general theory. Moreover, to develop the general theory it is necessary to present hypotheses which only the scientist's intuition can prevent from being gratuitous. Theoretically, hypotheses are, by definition, basically gratuitous. They are, in fact, presented so that they may be verified by positive research.

Although sociology has advanced, especially in recent years, we must recognize that it is a young science. As such, its concepts, its terminology, its methods, and its laws are not yet well enough established. Some sociologists, principally at the turn of the century, adopted a sectarian position. Some defended theory and general ideas and opposed empirical research, which had slight theoretical importance but great technical precision. The European sociologists, in general, took this position. Contrary to the Europeans, others – including many American sociologists – devoted themselves to detailed field research and attacked the gratuitous generalizations.

European sociology has been said to be more interesting

than true; American sociology, more true than interesting. Nevertheless, we can state today, in general terms, that this dichotomy has been overcome, and we can speak of a universal sociology. Nowadays, the inductive method (from the particular to the general) and the deductive method (from the general to the particular) are both valid as long as it is recognized that they complement each other and that neither of the two is truly scientific without the other. All this notwithstanding, the process of science is gradual and requires partial contributions which must also be complementary.

In the case of 'Colombian sociology' we find a tradition that cannot be classified with positive sociology. Until a few years ago it was possible to speak of Colombian social philosophers only. More recently we have seen the advent of positive sociology in our country. North American by original inspiration, it has lately been complemented by European influence. The empirical aspect of sociology begins to prevail among us, and this orientation is so strong that we may run the risk of devoting ourselves solely to the study of this field and may neglect the generalizations.

It is not possible to develop a Colombian sociology independent of universal sociology. Yet a Colombian sociology must be developed in two senses: (1) general theory and general methods must be applied to our concrete and specific reality; (2) to that theory and those methods, there must be contributed an analysis of new situations which our reality can suggest. The development of Colombian sociology would be thwarted as much by a lack of empirical research as by a lack of theoretical generalization. This study is an attempt to contribute to the latter aspect.

Although as a priest the author should disapprove of social acts opposed to Christian morality, as a sociologist he cannot allow himself to make value judgements without risk of falling into the methodological error of mixing positive science with normative science. Therefore, it is not surprising that a

phenomenon such as *la violencia*¹ – which, in general, cannot be justified from the moral point of view – is described as an important factor of social change, without any pronouncement about the goodness or evil of this change or about the morality of its consequences. To say ‘important’ is not to say ‘constructive’. The word ‘important’ is used here only because *la violencia* has wrought profound changes and therefore has unquestionable sociological importance.

Scope of the Analysis

To be able to assess the magnitude of a change, it is necessary to establish three aspects: (1) the situation before the change; (2) the factors that contributed to the change and the ways

1. [‘The Conservatives ruled [Colombia] until 1930, when they were ousted by the Liberals, who stayed in power until 1946. That year, the Liberal Party, by then a strong majority, was split by a demagogic but sincerely social-minded, dark-skinned lawyer named Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, who awakened in his party’s humble and poor something unknown until then – class consciousness. The split, however, allowed Conservative candidate Mariano Ospina Pérez to win, and his régime soon launched a programme that has since been labelled the ‘homogenization of Colombia’ – the wiping out of the Liberal majority through systematic murder. Then one day in 1948, while the Bogotá Conference of Hemisphere Foreign Ministers was in session, Gaitán himself was murdered. The culprit, Roa Sierra, was conveniently shot and killed on the spot, and no proof has ever fallen upon his employers. Both the Conservative and the traditional Liberal parties stood to gain from the death of a leader whose rising popular support threatened both party oligarchies. After his death, Gaitán’s followers took to the streets, and the resulting riot has passed into history under the name of the Bogotazo. Police squashed the capital’s rebellion. But Colombia fell into civil war. By 1953 more than 300,000 Colombians were killed – Liberals shot from above (army, police), Conservatives from below (guerrillas, rebels).’ (Gerassi, *op. cit.*, p. 152.) For a sociological explanation, see Camilo Torres’s references in the text that follows. – Ed.]

in which they contributed to it; (3) the situation after the effect of these factors.

However, it must be noted that in a socio-cultural change the foregoing points of reference are much less precise than in a physical change. The social variables are dynamic, and, therefore, when viewing social change it is impossible to consider any situation static. Before experiencing the phenomenon of *la violencia*,² rural Colombian society was a relatively static society, as we will try to describe below. To a certain extent this former static condition makes it easier to recognize that a change has taken place. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of change must be limited to certain variables because its complexity rules out the possibility of an exhaustive description.³

Many of the variables that we will take into account are by no means exclusive to Colombian society. In many sociology textbooks we find them as the determining criteria of any rural society. We have singled them out here because we

2. The phenomenon of *la violencia* in Colombia can be defined as a kind of social conflict that manifests itself through armed action of groups, especially in peasant neighbourhoods, a situation geographically general in Colombia – and endemic, inasmuch as it has continued for several years without solution. For more detailed explanation, see Germán Guzmán, Eduardo Umaña Luna, and Orlando Fals Borda, *La Violencia en Colombia*, Monografía Sociológica, Bogotá, Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Facultad de Sociología), 1962, p. 368.

3. It should be noted too, that in the present study we consider only the areas that have been affected at some time by the phenomenon. Nevertheless, according to the studies carried out, especially by Monsignor Germán Guzmán, almost all the rural areas of Colombia have been affected by *la violencia*. (See *La Violencia en Colombia: Estudio de un Proceso Social*, 2nd ed., Bogotá, Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1962, Vol. I. [Note that Torres usually refers to the author of *La Violencia en Colombia* as Guzmán; in fact both works referred to – the book published by Ediciones Tercer Mundo and the monograph issued by the Facultad de Sociología of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia – were written by Guzmán and Eduardo Umaña Luna and Orlando Fals Borda. – Ed.]

believe that they have been especially effected by *la violencia*.

The present analysis refers almost exclusively to the description made by Monsignor Germán Guzmán in the first volume of his book *La Violencia en Colombia* and to studies made about rural Colombian society before it suffered the impact of *la violencia*.⁴ We will try to fit into a theoretical framework, adapted to the description of change brought on by *la violencia*, the information contained in the other studies. The objective value of our attempt will depend on the objectivity of these studies, and many of the statements must be regarded as only working hypotheses that should be submitted to further field research so that eventually they may be proved, as we explained at length in the introduction.

Having made the foregoing remarks we can undertake to analyse the socio-cultural change by discussing the following: (1) the situation of the selected variables before *la violencia*; (2) the way in which these variables were effected by the phenomenon of *la violencia*; and (3) the final result. We will classify the variables into three groups: (1) those that are common to all rural societies; (2) those that are peculiar to rural societies of underdeveloped countries; and (3) those that are characteristic of Colombian rural society.

Naturally, this division is arbitrary. We use it in order to permit a more orderly analysis, but we will try to make even the first two categories of variables apply concretely to Colombia.

4. Gustavo Pérez, *El Campesino Colombiano: Un Problema de Estructura*, 2nd ed., Bogotá, Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, 1962; Orlando Fals Borda, *Campesino de los Andes*, Bogotá, Editorial Iquema, 1961; and idem, *El Hombre y la Tierra en Boyacá*, Bogotá, Editorial Antares, 1956.

Variables Considered

1. Variables common to every rural society.
 - a. Lack of division of work, of specialization, and of social roles.
 - b. Social isolation.
 - c. Importance of the rural neighbourhoods in social life.
 - d. Individualism.
 - e. Conflict with the outgroup.
 - f. Feeling of inferiority.
2. Variables peculiar to rural societies of underdeveloped countries.
 - a. Absence of vertical upward mobility.
 - b. Latent aggressiveness.
3. Variables characteristic of Colombian rural society.
 - a. Political sectarianism.
 - b. Lack of class consciousness.
 - c. Respect for private property.

Socio-cultural Changes Observed in Each of the Variables Considered

VARIABLES COMMON TO EVERY RURAL SOCIETY

Lack of Division of Work, of Specialization, and of Social Roles

Farming and cattle raising are almost the only activities of the Colombian farmer. In general, these two activities condition every other activity: the market, religion, family life. *La violencia* makes the farmer face new needs and thereby

imposes a division of work and specialization. In the active groups, in addition to what is required for any act of war as such, there arise the other needs specific to guerrilla warfare: espionage, clandestine communications, supplies, medical and social services, and public relations.⁵

We must also recognize that new needs arise for the passive groups. Among these various groups, as well as between them and the guerilla groups, cooperation is essential; they must keep a lookout and do all that is required in the event of forced migration and other emergencies. It has proved indispensable that one member of the rural community is appointed to attend regularly to each of these needs. Hereby a kind of specialization has been achieved; although elementary, it is an important part of social relations.

In rural society, because of the lack of division of specialization of labour, social relations are more intimate, frequent, and personal than elsewhere, and the result is the kind of folk society described by Redfield:

Such a society is small, isolated, nonliterate, and homogeneous, with a strong sense of group solidarity. The ways of living are conventionalized into that coherent system which we call 'a culture'. Behavior is traditional, spontaneous, uncritical, and personal; there is no legislation of habit or experiment and reflection for intellectual ends. Kinship, its relationships and institutions are the type categories of experience and the familial group is the unit of action. The sacred prevails over the secular. The economy is one of status rather than of the market.⁶

These were exactly the characteristics of our rural society before it went through *la violencia*.

5. See Guzmán et al., *La Violencia en Colombia*, monograph, p. 147 et passim. [Hereafter, the two editions, which at times vary considerably, will be referred to either as 'monograph' or as '2nd ed.'; the latter is the version published by Ediciones Tercer Mundo. - Ed.]

6. Robert Redfield, 'The Folk Society', *The American Journal of Sociology* (52), January 1947, p. 293.

However, we must call attention to the fact that traditional conduct – spontaneous, uncritical, and personal – resulted from a preponderance of secondary relations. The lack of division of labour and of specialization leads to this preponderance, inasmuch as the person who performs many functions determines social interaction much more than the function itself does. Because of the lack of specialization, there is no demand for – nor social expectation of – advancement through formal education. The lack of division of labour also accounts for group solidarity, that is, mechanistic solidarity, according to the theory of Durkheim.⁷ This mechanistic solidarity naturally produces a coherent system of life based on tradition and sentiment.

According to the theory of Tonnies,⁸ our rural society resembles the community (*Gemeinschaft*) more than the society (*Gesellschaft*). On the one hand, the subsistence economy stimulates primary relations much more than it does secondary relations and is one of the causes of the lack of division of labour. These phenomena produce important effects on the attitude towards social change. The predominance of primary relations over secondary relations begins to disappear as there is a greater division of labour and greater specialization – and therefore as social roles are multiplied and diversified.

In the communities affected by *la violencia*, social interaction begins to be based more on the functions of the individual than on the individual himself. Group solidarity begins to be more organic than mechanistic, that is to say, more based on the various roles' complementing of each other than on their homogeneity.

Social relations begin to be based more on reason than on

7. Emile Durkheim, *De la Division du Travail Social*, 1902, XXXII. [Published in English as *The Division of Labor in Society*, Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1960. – Ed.]

8. [See p. 176. – Ed.]

tradition and sentiment. Conduct no longer remains traditional and spontaneous but becomes critical and impersonal.⁹ The 'community' changes into a 'society'. We might say that our rural society, affected by *la violencia*, begins to organize itself in the sociological sense, in the sense that it begins to acquire an urban behaviour. This process of urbanization is carried out exclusively by tertiary activities (such as personal services, commerce, transportation, war) and is not connected with the secondary activity of industrialization.

The socio-economic effects are obvious: the urban way of life implies a rational, anti-traditional attitude towards social change. However, in this case this attitude is not accompanied by an industrialization that permits the standard of living to be raised. In a word, we can say that in the society affected by *la violencia* we have urban attitudes without the instruments peculiar to an urban society.

Social Isolation

Among the variables common to all rural societies we find social isolation, an element that Redfield includes within the folk society (see above). This ecological phenomenon is produced by the low demographic density and by the absence of communications that characterize rural societies. In the underdeveloped countries social isolation is aggravated by the lack of transportation and the absence of all kinds of communication. In Colombia, in particular, the isolation is even greater. The Colombian population is concentrated in the mountainous zone and in the valleys separated by moun-

9. It is useful to extend the theory on the transformation of the folk society due to the division of work. (Consult E. C. Hughes, 'Personality Types and the Division of Labor', *American Journal of Sociology*, 1928-33, pp. 754-68; Leopold Von Wiese and Howard Becker, *Systemic Sociology*, New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1932, pp. 223-5 *et passim*.)

tains. Besides being isolated from the cities and from the centres of their respective communities, the *veredas* (rural neighbourhoods)¹⁰ are isolated from each other.

La violencia increased the rural migrations not only to the city but also between the various country localities. Besides their regular system of communication, the armed forces were themselves a human system for transmitting news and introducing social values and standards of conduct, from the city to the rural area and between the various rural neighbourhoods. As a result, the rural populations have entered into contact with each other, becoming aware of common needs and acquiring a group solidarity as they compared their own socio-economic conditions with other higher levels of life, both rural and urban.

Local cultural patterns begin to spread, which produces an assimilation of this new awareness and which, in this way, begins to form a Colombian rural subculture. Social change occurs because the peasants, having created group solidarity (which Marx would call class consciousness), begin to form a pressure group at the base of the social pyramid, a pressure group which, when organized, can become important in the transformation of the social, political, and economic structures of Colombia.

Importance of the Rural Neighbourhoods in Social Life

In view of the isolation described above, it is logical that the neighbourhood should be of the greatest importance in the social life of the rural community. Human activity in this society is directly related to geographical location. The lack of division of labour almost completely rules out the need to move from one place to another. Therefore, the neighbourhood develops with the family as the most efficient institution

10. [Typical small settlements that are found, in the manner of a colony or outpost, along the trails of the isolated countryside. – Ed.]

of social control in the peasant society. The approval or disapproval of the neighbourhood has a great influence on the conduct of the peasant.

We know that there is a close relationship between the forces of social control and the standardization of the patterns of conduct. The phenomena of anomie rarely appear in an isolated and strictly controlled society. In this community the individual has little ability to assimilate, inasmuch as life in such a society has required only that he follow mechanically traditional patterns of conduct. Hence the coherence in the system of folk society, of which Redfield spoke. Hence, also, the lack of experimentation and the lack of intellectual reflection. Because conduct is more spontaneous than reflective, there is less ability to assimilate.

La violencia breaks down the barriers around the rural neighbourhood. The guerrilla groups begin to convert themselves into the new elements of control, not just in the *veredas* but in the entire region. In many rural areas governmental pressure is felt for the first time as all kinds of pressure (from physical violence to economical enticement) are brought to bear on the rural communities all over the region. In addition, the possibility – and, in some instances, the necessity – of migrating frees the rural groups from the social control of the surrounding community. In terms of social control, the reference groups are multiplied: besides the family, there is the guerrilla group; besides the neighbourhood itself, there are more or less belligerent groups of fugitive peasants.

The government's army and the groups of civilian armies, as well as the urban groups that take part directly or indirectly in *la violencia*, and, through it, intervene in the rural communities – all these groups, because of their different patterns and standards of conduct, relax the social control in a way similar to what takes place in the cities. The peasant, accustomed to act without reflection or criticism, to act by just following the patterns, loses all standards of conduct and

adapts himself, as much as he can, to the different reference groups. In this way anomic conduct spreads through the conglomerate of peasants as an effect of their emergence from the social isolation of the neighbourhood. The rural communities that have experienced *la violencia* are exposed to all kinds of cultural contact.

The peasants' emergence from social isolation has caused the neighbourhood to lose importance in his social life and has established, on a regional and national scale, new institutions that characterize the new subculture originated by *la violencia*. In a way similar to what happened to social isolation in the rural areas, local social control has been relaxed by the multiplication of controls independent of geographical locale. This multiplication of the various controls is explained by the diversification of rural activities. Nevertheless, that diversification is not the result of a development of economic productivity but is linked, rather, to activities of destruction, of defence, or simply to self-sustenance. These activities are difficult to fit into a plan of socio-economic development for the country. We can say that we find here the sociological phenomena of urbanization without the concomitant phenomena of industrialization or of creation of cities.

As a consequence of the new instruments of social control and of the laxity of these organisms, conduct has become more and more critical, but with a completely pathological set of values.

Individualism

In general, isolation makes for closed groups and societies. However, when each individual is also isolated in his work, individualism arises as a logical sequel. This happens in the rural societies that are made up of *minifundios*¹¹ or are

11. [See Chapter 4, note 1. – Ed.]

based on seasonal employment in the harvests. In these instances, each individual is concerned with his own interest and collaborates only to serve his own interests. Institutions like *la minga*, *la mano vuelta*, and *el convite*¹² are transitory and do not contradict but rather confirm individualistic behaviour in the sense that this behaviour results from the pursuit of objectives that serve predominantly personal interests. Individualism is an attitude defined by motivation. Nevertheless, social conduct is an index, at times the only index, of the motivation of an individual.

In view of the predominance of the *minifundio* owner and the harvest workers within the Colombian peasant population, we can be certain that the individualistic attitude is quite general, especially in the more isolated areas. The collectivist habits that some indigenous communities used to have can be said to have disappeared.

To a great extent, *la violencia* breaks up the peasants' individualism and forces the introduction of patterns of behaviour in which teamwork becomes indispensable. In a similar way, 'guerrillas for peace' are organized by the government to combat the real guerrillas. The guerrilla forces, officially and unofficially, constitute elements of collective work that also break down the individualistic attitude of our rural inhabitants.

12. *La Minga* is a pre-Spanish expression for community cooperation in public works. Under the Inca Empire - which stretched as far north as Pasto, Colombia - the *minga* was compulsory and provided the labour for building roads, bridges, silos, aqueducts, and other public works. *La mano vuelta* means simply reciprocal help on an individual level: 'I give you a hand with your work and you give me a hand with mine.' *El convite* is the modern version of the *minga*. *Convites* are massive and impressive efforts of entire communities. For example, more than 20,000 citizens of Pereira, Colombia, worked three days in a *convite* to clear the land for a new local airport. Unlike the pre-Spanish *minga*, the *convite* is voluntary and is usually carried out in a festive spirit.

Officially, 'Organizational Norms of the Guerrilla Forces'¹³ are established, giving collective interests precedence over individual interests. Unofficially, guerrillas work as teams, both in their combat activities and in self-provision. There are even established groups like the one at Pato, where, by collective effort, a mill was built, an orchard was planted, the production of cane sugar was organized, and the fields were irrigated, planted, weeded, tilled, and harvested. The group solidarity peculiar to every marginal community and especially to every group considered outside the law is fully confirmed within the guerrilla groups.

Among the peasants, *la violencia* creates circumstances which oblige them to abandon their individualism. Joint migrations, defence of the rural communities, and organization of production forge a mentality of cooperation, initiative, and class consciousness. In the Colombian rural community, possibilities for social change have brought about a new situation which has changed that community into a social unit with internal cohesion, initiative, and dynamics.

Conflict with the Outgroup

The rural groups with the foregoing characteristics are necessarily closed 'with a strong sense of solidarity', according to Redfield's description,¹⁴ internal solidarity that is usually linked directly to the degree of conflict with the outgroup elements. Our rural communities have, in effect, an attitude of distrust towards institutions and leaders – and, in general, towards all persons who do not belong to their social group.

The institutions belonging to the outgroup can be classified as official, ecclesiastical, and private. It is necessary to point out that many of the governmental, ecclesiastical, and

13. Guzmán et al., *La Violencia en Colombia*, monograph, p. 142.

14. Redfield, loc. cit.

private institutions belonged to the peasant group itself, in the sense that they were identified with the rural community much more than with the national level of these institutions. The use of the first person plural pronoun 'our' to discuss the church (as a building), the county courthouse, and some of the haciendas reveals to us this sentiment of solidarity with those institutions.

Nevertheless, the feeling towards official institutions at a level higher than the county level was not one of open conflict but rather of reserve and even of distrust. We could say the same of the feelings about non-local ecclesiastical and private institutions.

It is absolutely essential to distinguish between two very different kinds of rural communities – the one that belongs to the town and the one that belongs to the *vereda*. Between these two there existed, before *la violencia*, a relationship of accommodation in which the *veredal* communities were subordinate to the town communities. This accommodation sometimes changed into open conflict, especially for political reasons. These political reasons possibly were only a pretext used in order to allow expression of latent conflict rising out of the *vereda*'s inferior situation to the town that served as a kind of county seat.

Among the different *veredas*, too, we found a relationship of rivalry which was at times settled by conflict – only very rarely violent. Nevertheless, seldom did we find a relationship of accommodation between one *vereda* and another; and the common conflict with the town that served as county seat made the tensions diminish between the *veredas* and created a relationship of solidarity between the *veredas* themselves.

La violencia fundamentally changed human relationships within rural society. The governmental, ecclesiastical, and civil institutions – even the local ones – came to be considered in many instances as outgroup institutions that broke the

peasant group into splinter groups. Since, moreover, the peasant group was engaged in open conflict – sometimes violent – with the national or state level of these same institutions, a relationship of conflict was also established with these institutions at the local level.

Accommodation to the government, the church, and the bosses was destroyed. The relationship of accommodation between the *vereda* and the town also underwent a change. Some elements of the town joined in alliance with civil, ecclesiastical, and governmental institutions that were in conflict with the peasant group; others allied with the peasants and opposed the institutions. The people of the town entered into a relationship of cooperation either with the people of the *vereda* or with the outside institutions.

The *veredas'* relationships with each other have gone through various stages. After *la violencia* began, frictions that had been minor became more serious, at first taking on an entirely political complexion. Divided and rallied around the flags of the two traditional parties – Liberal and Conservative – the peasants engaged in violent conflict. The Communist groups rose up as a third faction, at times as a peasant group made up of those who wanted to fight not the other peasants but the official and unofficial authorities.

Thus, the first effect of *la violencia* was to divide the peasants. As it became chronic, an important social change appeared. Whenever violent pressure of the outgroup diminishes and the socio-economic needs increase, a new type of solidarity forms among the peasants – Liberal, Conservative, or Communist. This is what happened, for example, in the Valley of Cunday at the beginning of 1961.

This new type of solidarity is more organic than mechanistic, more rational than sentimental; the divisions that existed between the peasant groups prior to the appearance of this change are not all that it does away with. Before *la violencia*, leadership was concentrated in the town or county

seat, where the bureaucratic leaders were found.¹⁵ Charismatic leaders were found in the *veredas*, too. But at the county level they had little influence in official decisions about the governing of the rural community. What they reserved to themselves was a small share of unofficial power at the *vereda* level.

The structure of the peasant leadership changed with the onset of *la violencia*. The charismatic leaders of the *vereda* became much more important than the leaders of the town or county seat. When the traditional leaders – and the *gamonal*¹⁶ leaders – of the towns were obedient to the institutions responsible for violence against the peasants, they lost their positions of leadership among the rest of the peasants. The same thing happened to the charismatic leaders, who were therefore no longer charismatic in the true sense of the word. Very logically, the electoral processes developed a new kind of *gamonal* leadership, with which the national executives of the political parties are obliged to deal, in their attempt to gain the collaboration of the peasant masses.

Towards other individuals of the outgroup, a sentiment of solidarity or distrust was strictly conditioned by their attitude during *la violencia*. In effect, many extragroup persons – even some of upper-class and urban origin – were accepted by the peasant groups, provided they showed solidarity with the peasants' armed struggle. On the other hand, many genuinely rural elements were rejected if they showed solidarity with the adverse groups in that struggle. The solidarity with individuals was made more on the basis of common interests than of common ecological origin and much more on the basis of rational reasons than of traditional reasons.

The conflict with the extragroup elements and the out-

15. Classification taken from Max Weber, *Economía y Sociedad*, Fondo de Cultura Económica de México, is the one accepted by most sociologists.

16. [See page 185, note 1. – Ed.]

group of social relations in the rural communities fundamentally changes the structure of our peasant group by creating a new and more rational type of solidarity which is the basis of a conflict with the outgroup elements not identified with the interests of this community.

Feeling of Inferiority

The peasants' feelings of their inferiority to urban inhabitants have usually been described as an individual psychological phenomenon. However, in cases in which this phenomenon represents a collective attitude, we can apply it to psycho-social analysis if we make the appropriate conceptual concessions. The peasants used to feel inferior fundamentally to the institutions and individuals who belonged to urban society. This feeling was translated into different kinds of relationships: at times, there was accommodation; at other times, conflict. *La violencia* made the peasants feel safe in opposing urban institutions, persons, and patterns of conduct. Actually, the peasant guerrilla groups have never directly attacked the big Colombian cities. Even so, in warfare, the feeling of inferiority has been replaced by a feeling of superiority. In the guerrilla war, the peasants are conscious of having overcome the army, of having succeeded in defeating an urban institution that constitutes the principal bastion of defence of our cities.

Putting to one side the objective truth or falseness of this new feeling, we have to recognize the psycho-social change that it implies, inasmuch as one element essential to the formation of a pressure group is that this group should feel safe to exercise social pressure on certain important groups.

VARIABLES PECULIAR TO THE RURAL SOCIETIES OF UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Absence of Vertical Upward Mobility

Social mobility has always been considered an element of social change. Nevertheless, it seems necessary to distinguish between a simply material social mobility and a socio-cultural mobility. Material social mobility consists of a simple shift of individuals from one social group to another, from one geographical area to another, from one status or one social class to another. Socio-cultural mobility necessarily implies the change of value structure, of conduct, and, therefore, of social institutions as a consequence of material mobility.

The relationship between material social mobility and socio-cultural mobility is obvious, as much from the quantitative as from the qualitative point of view. Quantitatively, if the shift of individuals of one group to another or from one area to another is carried out *en masse*, it is very difficult to prevent socio-cultural changes from occurring in the process of assimilation, as much in the individuals who admit the newcomers as in the newcomers themselves. The conformity of the newcomers cannot be duly controlled. In contrast, if the shift is made slowly and by a small group, it is very probable that the socio-cultural patterns of the society admitting the newcomers will remain almost unchanged and the new elements will be the only ones changed by the social mobility, since in this case conformity will be imposed as a requisite for the acceptance of the new elements.

Qualitatively, it is necessary to distinguish the type of individual who becomes mobile: the ascent of a leader is not the same as the ascent of a person without influence in his social group. It is also necessary to define the requirements of social mobility. It is possible that for horizontal mobility

no demand is made by the host community whereas for a vertical upward mobility it is necessary to adjust to the patterns of social ascent of the institutions that control this ascent; in other words, it is necessary to conform.

In the present analysis we consider social mobility not only from the material point of view but also from the socio-cultural point of view, since, in our opinion, the latter aspect is the one most directly relevant to the study of social change. Social mobility from the rural areas to the city occurs everywhere, but in underdeveloped countries it presents more sharply defined characteristics.

It is difficult to make a similar statement about horizontal mobility, as understood to be a non-ascending migratory flow to urban centres. The rapid growth of big cities of the underdeveloped countries, caused fundamentally by the migration from rural areas, is a sign that the horizontal rural mobility in those countries is greater than in the industrialized countries. Furthermore, despite the shortcomings of the transportation system, the factors of expulsion from the rural areas and of attraction to the city are of greater importance in countries not yet industrialized.

In view of the existence of vicious circles spiralling downward within the socio-economic structure of the developing countries, the vertical downward mobility is much greater than in the developed countries, especially in rural areas. The increase of production cannot keep pace with the increase in the rural population. The continual dividing of the land aggravates the problem of the *minifundios* and increases with each new generation. Manpower becomes cheaper because the increase of the population is not accompanied by a proportional increase of opportunities for work and productivity.

We will try to analyse upward social mobility in the underdeveloped countries by first analysing the channels of social ascent in those countries. We believe that this analysis

permits us to see the quantitative as well as the qualitative aspect; we can, in this way, try to determine the requirements imposed by the institutions that control the ascent, requirements closely linked to the quantitative aspect as a result of the volume of the population that shifts from one class to another.

We consider the following to be the principal channels for social ascent: the economic, the cultural, the political, the bureaucratic, the military, and the ecclesiastical.

Economic Channel. The ownership of manufactured goods and consumer goods is, in general, a rapid means of social ascent. In private enterprise, the ability to acquire wealth is absolutely related to the average inhabitant's business ability. In other words, the capacity to ascend economically does not necessarily require long-range training, as it does in the cultural, military, or ecclesiastical fields. Ownership and use of goods and services requires only superficial training, and, by its very nature, this channel of ascent makes no demands.

To own and to use is something everybody knows how to do. It is much easier even than to administer or to give orders. Therefore, the economic channel is, in itself, more rapid than the bureaucratic and the political. Moreover, in a régime of private enterprise and even in a collectivist régime, as far as consumer goods are concerned, satisfaction of man's vital needs depends on economic ascent.

For these two reasons, among others, the blocking of the economic channel of social ascent constitutes one of the most serious social frustrations, especially in the underdeveloped countries, where capacitation of the individual is low and the national income is limited. When this frustration is recognized and possibilities for relieving it are offered, the real social problem appears. One of the characteristics of the underdeveloped countries is the concentration of goods and services in a few hands. The few propertied people, in general,

block the channels of economic ascent unless they profit from opening them. Those who begin to emerge from their feudal mentality of owning rather than producing, those who begin to have a capitalist mentality of greater productivity – these people will open economic channels to other people who could become better consumers; and they will open them at the rate at which social pressure from below becomes a serious threat to the economic structures that benefit these few propertied people.

Nevertheless, these two circumstances (mentality of productivity and social pressures from below) are two indexes of incipient development. Where they do not exist, there is almost total obstruction of the economic channel of ascent. This obstruction is greater in the rural areas. The low productivity of the farming and animal husbandry business and the subsistence economy in the rural areas of underdeveloped countries make the effective demand for products increase more slowly compared to the increase of income per capita than in the industrial areas. Moreover, rural traditionalism impedes rapid change in consumer habits of the peasant population. As a result, although some of the propertied people do think in terms of opening channels of economic ascent to increase consumer demand, the rural inhabitants are the last to be considered future customers.

In their ability to exert social pressure, the peasants are also in a position of inferiority. Social isolation, individualism, and traditionalism made it difficult for the peasants to form a pressure group. Until they have social contacts that can spark changes in these and other variables, the peasants will not pose a threat to the ruling economic structure.

As we noted above, *la violencia* impels the peasants to begin to form a pressure group. The *violencia* that made the members of this group aware of their needs and aware of their own human resources to meet those needs will draw them out of their traditional passivity and give them group

solidarity for very specific purposes. *La violencia* develops the conflict with the outgroup and institutionalizes it.

La violencia had two principal, direct effects on social ascent by the economic channel. In the first place, it created the contacts necessary to arouse the peasants to their wretched poverty and made that poverty more deeply felt in all the areas in which the phenomenon occurred. In the second place, and simultaneously, *la violencia* made it possible for economic gain to be achieved by persons at all the various levels of the social hierarchy. In other words, *la violencia* had the politico-economic effect of assuring bureaucratic favours to the governing class, through acquisition of great properties devaluated by *la violencia*,¹⁷ through confiscation of crops, through withholding of payments of debts to public and private persons, through traffic of arms, and through confiscation of animals and small properties. Together with an awareness of his wretchedness, the peasant acquired, through *la violencia*, instruments that Colombian rural society considered anomic but that turned out to be efficacious for social ascent. As much in this channel as in those that we will analyse below, we will show that whenever there is pressure to ascend, obstruction of the normal routes of ascent causes people to take recourse to abnormal or pathological channels, if these latter seem to be more efficacious.¹⁸

Since *la violencia* began, the peasant has made a habit of using any available means to try to ascend economically or at least to support himself. Admittedly, there is a marked rate of criminality among the guerrilla groups, but the new generations of peasants will not be able to end *la violencia* unless normal channels of economic ascent are opened and

17. Guzmán et al., *La Violencia en Colombia*, 2nd ed., p. 274 et passim.

18. We use the words 'normal' and 'abnormal' to refer to the cultural patterns accepted formally by most of Colombian society.

prove to be efficacious for the majority of the rural population.

*Cultural Channel.*¹⁹ When we speak of cultural ascent in society, we refer to the acquisition of those cultural forms that belong to a higher class or social status. These forms can be acquired directly or indirectly. They can be acquired indirectly if a given status or class has been reached by some channel other than the cultural and if these forms are acquired by integration and assimilation into the new class or status. They can be acquired directly if the formal integration and assimilation of the new values or institutions have been achieved through academic education. Let us discuss the latter – direct acquisition.

Because there is, in underdeveloped countries, a shortage of teachers and schools for primary education (and a high rate of illiteracy), because teaching is concentrated in the cities, and because there is student absenteeism (principally for economic reasons), the possibilities of acquiring new cultural forms are limited to only a part of the society and the distribution is by no means favourable to the peasant.

In Colombia the rural system of *escuela alternada*²⁰ makes this situation still worse. Due to the scarcity of classrooms, the low number of class hours, and the urban priority, there is a definite correlation between economic status and amount of primary schooling received. This correlation becomes

19. We understand culture to be the combination of values, patterns of conduct, and institutions which are transmitted from one generation to another within a society. The term implies no favourable value judgement.

20. [Schools operating on two or three shifts daily, usually girls in the morning, boys in the afternoon, and adults in the evening. Obviously, the school day is hence much shorter than in one-shift schools. – Ed.]

greater when we consider that student absenteeism is seriously detrimental to learning.

In this way we see how the blocking of the economic channel of ascent has an important influence on the blocking of this primary phase of the cultural channel of ascent.

The economic factor's effect on the cultural channel becomes decisive at the secondary level of schooling in those countries in which, as in Colombia, the majority of the secondary schools are private or parochial. (82 per cent of Colombian students attend such schools.) It is logical that without subsidies and without adequate controls secondary schooling is costly and becomes the almost exclusive patrimony of the upper economic class. Even the few governmental or low-tuition secondary schools that do exist are kept in operation only by the influence of persons who have economic power. The economic factor is clearly predominant.

Without fear of error we can state that at this secondary stage of learning the cultural ascent is determined by the possibilities of economic ascent. If economic ascent is obstructed, so is the cultural ascent.

University education in underdeveloped countries is not especially costly in tuition. The private institutions do not have enough prestige to charge the average student a very high registration fee or tuition. In Colombia approximately 50 per cent of the university students attend private institutions. Of course, however, there are a few private universities where high tuitions are paid by a small minority of the private university students.

The blocking of this higher stage of the cultural channel is caused more by the quantitative limitations and the limitations of the accessibility of the previous stage (secondary schooling). The quota for admissions is usually very small compared to the demand. In Colombia, where secondary

school is so inaccessible, out of 16,000 students who presented themselves as candidates to enter universities in 1958, only 9,800 were accepted. Furthermore, it is calculated that of the ones who do enrol only 40 per cent finish their courses.²¹

This quantitative limitation, made on the basis of perfectionist elimination of candidates, has many causes, including bureaucratic red tape. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that the governmental universities are notoriously inadequate in satisfying the need for leaders in an underdeveloped country such as Colombia. Hence, the economic factor determines, to a great extent, the blocking of the cultural channel at this upper level of education.

Even so, it is necessary to carry the analysis further. The excessively strict requirements for enrolment and specialization – insisted upon by the universities – serve the intellectual élite as a device to obstruct the cultural channel of social ascent and to exclude, as much as possible, the competition that could threaten the positions of the members of that élite. We know that when competition increases in any professional field those who practise that profession lose a certain amount of their prerogatives and privileges. Therefore, although the structure of the developing countries makes it inadvisable and although the modern pedagogic trends are quite the opposite, our universities insist on offering professional courses keyed to industrialized countries and on selecting a minimum of future professionals according to perfectionist standards.

In conclusion, we can state that the upper level of the cultural channel of ascent is obstructed by economic and cultural factors. Attention must be called to the fact that in these developing countries anyone who does not have a conformist attitude towards the cultural élite will find it very difficult to achieve social ascent through a professional education.

21. Data taken from *Estadística de la Educación Superior*, Bogotá, Asociación Colombiana de Universidades, 1958.

Because this élite controls ascent, only very rarely does it tolerate ascent by individuals who want to reduce its control. In the university we clearly see how the level of conformity rises as the end of course draws near and as it becomes necessary to be accepted by the professional élite that maintains itself because of the power structure.

Those requirements for ascent make social mobility through the cultural channel more material than socio-cultural and thereby imply an absence of change in the social structure of the country. It would be especially interesting to make a more profound study of the rural areas, showing the percentage of students of peasant origin who are in the university and in the secondary schools.²² In view of the structure described above, we can state here that the percentage is a minority. Hence, the peasants find the cultural channel of social ascent even more drastically blocked.

Despite the guerrilla groups' sporadic requirements that their members undergo training, we cannot say that *la violencia* has constituted a new channel for social ascent by the formal cultural route. On the contrary, the already precarious educational programmes of our rural zones were affected by the destruction of schools, the flight of teachers, and the impossibility for the children to attend class. Nevertheless, it is important to note that after having suffered all this the peasants are more aware of the need to be educated. And now that the above-mentioned factors have enabled the peasants to form a pressure group, education and advancement will be two of the foremost objectives of their action.

During the surveys made preliminary to projects of land

22. Robert Williamson, *El Estudiante Colombiano y Sus Actitudes*, Monografía 13, Bogotá, Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Facultad de Sociología), 1962. This publication reports that only 6 per cent of the university students are children of peasants.

reform, it was possible to verify that the first need felt by the Colombian peasants in the zones of *la violencia* is likely to be the need for a school to which they can send their children. Only by awakening a desire for progress in the peasants, who have borne the brunt of the phenomenon, has *la violencia* represented an advance towards formal education.

Political Channel. Like the cultural channel of ascent, we find the political channel divided into various levels and into official and unofficial aspects. By political ascent we understand, in general, a rise in an authoritarian régime in which force may be exercised by the state itself or by means of individual and collective pressures. We will use the restricted concept of political power and regard it as political action as such, that is to say, official political action within the structure of the state.²³ Since this official political action is carried out by means of state offices, we will limit ourselves to examining the possibility of ascent in the political positions of the government, excluding from this channel the administrative (which is discussed in the bureaucratic channel). These positions are found on national, state, and county levels.

In underdeveloped countries the mass of peasants are excluded from positions at the state and national levels. The only exceptions are those few underdeveloped countries in which true agrarian parties exist with wide popular support and electoral force. To examine positions available on the county level, we must analyse the processes of ascent and their requirements in order to check the penetrability of the political channel in this first stage.

In general, we can say that selection of government functionaries in underdeveloped countries – especially in Latin America – is made not on the basis of objective standards of professional competence and administrative efficiency but on

23. See Weber, *op cit.*

the basis of economic and social criteria and the need to secure votes.

Although it is more an unofficial institution of politically oriented action²⁴ than an official political institution, the institution of *gamonalismo* has a great influence on the standards by which government positions are filled. The *gamonal* is a candidate himself or casts a decisive vote in the election of some other candidate to an office such as adviser, mayor, or judge at the county level. The *gamonal's* influence is based on economic and social superiority and has an important effect on electoral results.

Even in countries in which (as in Colombia) the majority of the county functionaries are appointed rather than elected, influence over voters is a decisive criterion in their selection. Nevertheless, within this channel, in order to differentiate the bureaucratic channel from the political channel, we will consider only the functionaries who have repressive power over the citizen. Among the official political functionaries we have county advisers, mayors, and judges (in the case of Colombia). Since we do not consider the military as functionaries, we will devote a special analysis to that social group. The other county functionaries can have political influence, but they are not political functionaries in the sense explained above.

In some underdeveloped countries, such as Colombia, certain political municipal functionaries are named by the regional and central authorities. In this case, the appointment is made principally on the basis of a candidate's support of government policy, provided this support is combined with social prestige in his community. The decisive factors for political ascent, then, are those that determine the criteria used by the central authorities to make their choices and those that constitute social prestige at the county level.

Naturally, in order to make well-founded statements about

24. See Weber, *op. cit.*

these factors it would be necessary to do detailed scientific research. Even so, as a working hypothesis we can state that because those who hold power are a minority and because, in general, their advancement has not been due to qualifications and objective criteria of selection, they will have the following characteristics: (1) a conservative attitude towards the power structure; (2) social insecurity; (3) aggressiveness towards members of the outgroup.

When we speak of the power structure, we refer principally to the channels of social ascent that we have already analysed – the economic and the cultural. We believe that the political minority is interested in mechanisms to obstruct those two channels because any modification of those channels would cause their heads to fall – if not as individuals, certainly as a privileged class. Therefore, only the conformists are granted social ascent. If this political élite does not itself own the goods of production, it depends heavily on the economic élite by which its public – and therefore also its private – life is subsidized, since the economic policy, so basic in general politics of the underdeveloped countries, cannot be carried out without the collaboration of this political élite.

Furthermore, even if the political leader belongs to the cultural élite (the usual merit he must have to compensate in the eyes of the ruling class for not belonging to the economic élite), the cultural élite is also influenced directly and indirectly by economic power, as we explained when we spoke of a cultural channel of social ascent.

Social insecurity in the politician's position of leadership is a result of the subjective standards of ascent. The individual who ascends is dependent on another person and not on objective and impersonal requirements which might assure his occupational stability.

For the political functionaries whose appointment to office depends on this political élite and even for members of that minority who exercise central power, the above-

mentioned characteristics of this political élite block the political channel of social ascent. Among the factors of obstruction, the economic factor, together with and through the cultural, seems to be the most predominant. The fundamental criterion for political ascent must, therefore, be conformity to the ruling class. Of course, among those who conform to an equal degree, the most capable will be chosen. Nevertheless, this structure of political ascent makes vertical mobility purely material and prevents any social change in the socio-cultural structures.

The economic factor is found to be just as predominant in social prestige at the county level. In the political influence of the *gamonal*, we must consider this factor basic. Personal appeal and ability must take second place to economic backing – either the candidate's own or someone else's. Nevertheless, on the county level, these two qualities are relatively important since primary relationships are important – especially in the rural area.

On the county level social prestige is the basis for selection not only of the functionaries named through the hierarchy but also of those elected in a democratic way. Therefore, standards of social prestige also rule the political ascent of the elected functionaries.

Even so, the influence of the economic factor is not merely a matter of prestige but also directly of the election of functionaries. Elections are carried out with a series of economic pressures on the voter, such as a threat of being dismissed from a job or a promise of some reward. In the under-developed countries, besides electoral fraud, elections are controlled by minorities through the executive committees of the political parties and the *gamonal* leaders who exert economic, social, and religious pressures that tend to support the power structure and keep the channels of social ascent firmly blocked – pressures that make only the conformist elements get elected.

In this way we see how in underdeveloped countries the political channel of social ascent is obstructed for a majority of the population that has neither economic resources and personal friendship with those who hold the economic power nor enough formal education combined with economic power and the appropriate friendship – friendship linked closely to conformity to the status quo.

La violencia established a new informal system of government in the peasant areas in which it broke out. Although it would be difficult to determine the percentage of old, traditional, or *gamonal* leaders within the new guerrilla leadership, it is obvious that within the normal structures of social ascent many of those new leaders would never have attained that power that they did obtain through *la violencia*.²⁵

There has been talk of the existence of republics in the central regions of the country. Certain zones are known to be controlled by guerrilla chiefs. The fact is that on the regional level there has arisen an unofficial and anonymous government which at times has more power than the legal government has. As we said before, it is not surprising that the executive committees of the political parties try to make alliances with the new leaders. The influence of the traditional *gamonalismo* is beginning to be wrested away by the guerrilla leaders, who are much less conformist. This transfer of power has influenced the social structure of our rural communities. The importance acquired by these peripheral groups headed by new leaders in the *veredas* of the counties has resulted in a loss of power for the middle class which lives in the central nuclei of the counties – the towns – and which used to enjoy the benefits of power, administration, and general economic and social control.

To a certain extent unofficial political power has been made more democratic in our rural areas, and there has arisen

25. Guzmán et al., *La Violencia en Colombia*, 2nd ed., Chapter VI: 'Semblanzas de Jefes Guerrilleros'.

a frankly nonconformist attitude, expressed in a pathological and anonymous way just now. Nevertheless, this change provides a basis for the advancement of the *vereda* peasants, who heretofore had been a marginal group not only compared to the rest of the country but even compared to the rural community.

If the ACPO, the land reform, and the other popular movements organized by the government within the agricultural communities do not succeed in opening normal channels (indirectly, of course) for the political advancement of the peasant grass-roots leaders, *la violencia* will continue to be the only effective political channel of ascent for the non-conformist Colombian peasant.

Anyway, even though new channels of normal ascent should open, these new channels will necessarily have a structure different from that of the channels now in existence. The requirement for future ascent will no longer be political conformity. New agreements with the peasant leaders will have to be made on the basis of their influence among the people, influence that will be bolstered more by efficiency than by subjective standards.

Bureaucratic Channel. The bureaucratic channel of social ascent is the one which functions exclusively through administrative positions, as explained partially above. In other words, it functions through positions that have executive functions with pre-established norms in the field of public – as well as private – organization. Therefore, it is necessary to consider bureaucratic ascent in private administration and in public administration.

To establish the criteria of ascent within the bureaucratic circles of private enterprise, it is necessary to define the kind of private enterprise in which this bureaucracy is employed. When it is an enterprise more feudal than capitalist, the standards will be more subjective than objective.

When an enterprise is more capitalistic than feudal, the standards will be more objective than subjective. In this sense, the subjective standards will have a negative rather than positive orientation. That is to say, they will be used as standards more of exclusion than of promotion. Principal among the standards for promotion is the conformity of the candidate. An individual who was well qualified but non-conformist would find it quite difficult to ascend the ladder of private bureaucracy. This circumstance leads to the conclusion that even on this scale the privileged minority will keep the situation under control by preserving the stability of the power structure and by preventing the ascent of anyone who does not strengthen the position of the minority.

Just as we defined for the political channel of ascent, in underdeveloped countries in general and in Latin America in particular,²⁶ the criteria for social ascent within government bureaucracy follow standards that are more subjective than objective. Within the subjective standards is the influence – political, social, and economic – that the job candidate may have with the functionary who is prospective employer. That is not to say that these influences are impossible to control objectively through the number of votes cast in the zone of influence, family prestige, or income per capita. But what we are stressing here is that these standards are reflected through the person who makes the appointment.

In addition, these subjective standards include the personal appeal of the candidate, his ideological tendencies, and the commitments of family and friends.

The concept of subjective standards disregards the professional qualifications relevant to the functions to be performed. By no means do we want to exclude entirely the objective standards from the standards of ascent mobility. The only thing that we want to establish is the priority of

26. See Oscar Handlin, *Clases Sociales en América Latina*, Washington, D.C., Social Sciences, Pan American Union.

subjective criteria, among which we believe those conditioned by political and economic influence to be the most important for social ascent.

In underdeveloped countries bureaucracy is the most common source of employment. In it we find the proportionally stronger percentage of investments of national budget²⁷ and the least requirements of professional qualifications. For this reason the number of candidates for jobs in the governmental bureaucracy exceeds the number of opportunities. The employer takes advantage of this surplus in the supply of workers: he requires that the candidate possess qualities that can make the employer's own position more secure.

As we explained above, the positions occupied because of subjective criteria are unstable positions because they depend more on persons than on universal pre-established requirements accepted in those developed countries where there are relatively strict and efficient administrative careers. In underdeveloped countries security is provided more by the job candidate's political influence and economic position. The political influence of the employee guarantees the employer the respect of the politicians who participate in the government directly as functionaries and indirectly through organs of the party on which the employer's own position depends.

Not only does economic influence have indirect effect on politicians. In case of retirement from public bureaucracy, economic influence guarantees a possibility of ascent in private enterprise.

In general, and especially in underdeveloped countries, the economic criteria of those who grant jobs have a dominant influence, together with and through the political criterion. Hence, in those countries a great part of the political struggle is motivated by the prospect of sharing bureau-

27. In 1961 the budget for bureaucracy was approximately 30 per cent of the national budget. In Bogotá it was approximately 60 per cent for the same year.

cratic favours, and, hence, too, the political ideology of the government employees follows the twists and turns of election results and of politics in general. The effect produced in Colombia by the establishment of administrative parity is interesting from the viewpoint of political sociology. The bureaucratic struggle was carried to the heart of each of the traditional parties, producing wide splits in them and having obvious bureaucratic consequences for the internal factions.

In this way social ascent through the bureaucratic channel is conditioned by the economic and political channels. That is to say, the bureaucratic ascent in government depends, to a great extent, and in the final instance, on conforming to the minority that holds economic, political and cultural power.

We would like to note three of the principal ways by which *la violencia* affects the public administration: (1) the establishment of an unofficial military administrative system, (2) the decentralization of administration, (3) the appearance of new pressures to control administrative positions.

The guerillas had an unofficial military administrative system. As the book *La Violencia en Colombia* tells us, there were several levels in the guerrilla organization, from the guerilla unit or cadre to the section, the company, the guerilla group, and the guerilla division. The whole military administration had to be developed within this hierarchy, and non-military administrative positions were created: political commissary, community leader, land distribution officer, *vereda* delegate, and secretary general.²⁸

Besides the rules of warfare, the norms imposed on the fighting men included a series of elementary administrative principles. According to these principles established by the Democratic Front of National Liberation of Colombia, the attainment of the rank of officer required – in addition to political knowledge of Marxist nature – the ability to read,

28. Guzmán et al., *La Violencia en Colombia*, 2nd ed., Chapter V.

write and spell, the ability to perform the four operations of arithmetic, and the ability to practise good conduct in public and private life.

The administration of justice is beginning to be practised among the guerrillas and even among those peasant groups that used to enjoy impunity. Unofficial codes of punishment and incentives provide for military and administrative control of the peasant population in general and especially of the combat groups.

Lately, the so-called independent republics have multiplied in Colombia. Inside these territories, where official governmental authority does not reach, an administration parallel to governmental administrations has been organized with new positions and new functions. This new unofficial administration has constituted an avenue of access to bureaucracy, with different selective standards based on military qualifications, political sectarianism, and elementary administrative ability.

The unofficial administration described above is beginning to enjoy great regional autonomy. The revolutionary commands establish themselves with eminently practical standards for local conditions and guerrilla activity. *La Violencia en Colombia* lists the guerrilla commands that existed during the first stage of this period.

- Command for the Revolutionary Forces of the Eastern Plains
- Revolutionary Command of Santander
- Command of the Revolutionary Forces of La Palma and Yacopí
- Command of the Revolutionary Forces of the South of Tolima
- Command of East Tolima
- Command of Suma Paz
- Command of Pavón
- Command of the Forces of Self-Defence of Gaitania
- Command of the Forces of Self-Defence of Tequendama
- Command of Río Chiquito and Simbola-Paez

Command of Nare

Command of Anori

Guerrilla Command of La Ribera

Monsignor Guzmán says: 'Except for some parts of the Llanos, those commands never succeeded in coordinating with each other nor in carrying out joint actions.'²⁹

The decentralization is autonomous and not coordinated. The peripheral and local communities acquire a greater importance than the central administrative groups of the government's administration.

As we saw above, advancement in bureaucratic circles of governmental administration requires – in addition to a certain degree of competence – a strict conformity, which guarantees the hierarchical control of the ruling classes down to the lowest ranks of public administration.

In the new unofficial guerrilla administration, positions and promotions are granted according to different standards, many of them considered anti-social but, in any case, based on qualities more likely to be possessed by the majority of the population. Selection is made more by grass-roots pressure than by decisions of centralized, distant groups. The guerrilla leader himself is subject to pressure from those with whom he lives and on whom his prestige, his safety, and his life depend. To advance within this unofficial guerrilla administration, the conformity with the power structure became an obstacle, and another kind of conformity was demanded – an unconditional revolutionary position.

Not only on their own unofficial guerrilla administration were the pressures of the newly organized peasant group exerted. We know that the pressure of the fighting groups had a decisive influence in the administration of justice in the replacement of judicial functionaries. Likewise, we know

29. Guzmán et al., *La Violencia en Colombia*, 2nd ed., p. 163.

that many other functionaries have to respect the opinions of the main regional leaders of the fighting groups.

As a result of *la violencia*, we can state that many peasants on various levels of the administrative hierarchy have become accustomed to exerting pressures. The peasant masses affected by the phenomenon have also become accustomed to exerting pressures on the administration. They have found within their reach a bureaucratic channel of ascent that they did not have within the governmental administrative structure.

If the official government's public administration does not set sufficiently objective requirements and does not provide instruments that will enable the majority of our population to meet these requirements, the unofficial guerrilla administration will continue to be more efficacious than the public administration as a channel for social ascent through bureaucracy.

Military Channel. The military channel of upward social mobility is comprised of all the formal ranks of the army, navy, air force, and police.

The function of the military institutions is to maintain the established order. In underdeveloped countries the minority élite has the greatest interest in maintaining this order on which their privileges depend. Furthermore, the economic life of the army depends on the governmental budget approved by the parliament. In certain countries, such as Colombia, the highest ranks are conferred or approved by the parliament. In this way the armed forces also depend, significantly, on the dominant group which, in turn, will depend on them to maintain order.

In general, because they are politically, culturally, economically, and bureaucratically inferior, military institutions have been the instrument of the dominant groups. Inasmuch as those groups are not usually truly popular in the develop-

ing countries and do not change the structures that are unfavourable to the majority, there are frequent disturbances of public order. When popularity is lacking, recourse is had to bayonets. Naturally, the military leaders can select the political subgroup that they want to support within the élite. When they exercise government power directly, they always do it supported by a segment of the propertied class. The military government will fall when this support disappears without being replaced by another. In this way, the control of the ruling minority is exercised through agreements with the military power.

The political, economic, and cultural élite will be willing even to turn the government of the country over to the armed forces on the condition that they preserve the power structure. The military will make the ruling classes respected, provided they are granted privileges in proportion to the urgency of their intervention. In case international or civil war erupts, or in case the violence in the country should grow worse, these privileges will have to be greater than those granted normally. If the privileges do not increase proportionately, there will be a conflict that can culminate in a military coup. Still, even in this case, the only channel that would be interrupted – at least temporarily – would be the political channel. If political power is used against the interests of the economic minority, the latter will scheme and manoeuvre to overthrow the government. We have already stressed the dominance of economic force over political force.

We see how the military channel is controlled by the economic, political, and cultural minority that also controls the bureaucratic power. Nevertheless, it is necessary to note some traces of the independence of the military channel from the economic and cultural channels. Because of economic and social reasons, more than because of functional qualifications, there is an almost insurmountable barrier between the ranks of non-commissioned and commissioned officers. How-

ever, to the officers, the higher military training offers a few opportunities for social ascent despite economic and cultural limitations.

Military education is quite inexpensive compared to private education in general. Furthermore, there is a simultaneous stipend that helps overcome the economic obstacles. These facilities result in social ascent of the lower classes – even of the middle class – with standards relatively independent of the general economic and cultural structures, the cultural at least from secondary school on. Nevertheless, although there is notably more possibility for ascent by this channel, the control of the dominant minorities is not to be overlooked. On the contrary, at every level there is a requirement that culminates in the contractual conformity which we discussed above with reference to the highest ranks of the **military hierarchy**.

La violencia has had several effects on the structure of the regular Colombian army. Nevertheless, here we take into account how the peasant society was affected by gaining, through *la violencia*, an unofficial military channel for social ascent. In this sense we find that the most important effects for the socio-cultural changes were the creation of an unofficial army and the new standards to determine promotions **within the new army**.

As we mentioned when we discussed the administrative channel, the guerrilla army had a well-established structure copied from the structure of the regular army, combined with an unofficial administrative structure adapted to the needs of guerrilla warfare. In addition to the traditional ranks there were duties that permitted women and children to enlist.³⁰

Although in every military institution conformity to superiors is a basic criterion for advancement, it is necessary to analyse whether the military institution itself conforms

30. Guzmán et al., *La Violencia en Colombia*, 2nd ed., pp. 163-4.

to the power structure. As we showed above, the army in an underdeveloped country has as its primary function the keeping of internal order, which, translated to the political field, means maintaining the power structure. The guerrilla army has precisely the opposite purpose – transforming these structures. Therefore, the criteria for advancement must be keyed to the revolutionary efficiency of the one receiving the promotion.

Besides these basic criteria there are others such as the desire to serve, loyalty, courage, and nerve.³¹ Even so, it is necessary to note some intellectual and political criteria the guerrillas have taken into account in making promotions and to note the guerrillas' more democratic relations between officer and subordinate and the introduction of the subordinate's right to criticize and to express his opinions. The peasants found within the unofficial army a channel of social ascent that they would never have found within the regular army of our country. Guerrilla leaders, to whose social extraction we referred above, could hardly have attained in the regular army the ranks that they have today: general, colonel, captain.

In the first edition of the book *La Violencia in Colombia*, we found pictures such as the one of 'Mariachi' in a general's uniform, reviewing his troops. It is not at all probable that 'Mariachi' would have attained even the lowest officer's rank within the regular army. If he had, it would have been by adapting himself to the standards of conformity with the status quo and by obtaining the necessary economic and political support of the ruling classes.

In this way *la violencia* opened another channel of social ascent. As in those channels analysed earlier, we can state that when the need for ascent cannot be satisfied by normal

31. Guzmán et al., *La Violencia en Colombia*, 2nd ed., pp. 158-9, viz. 'Mandamientos del Buen Guerrillero' and 'Condiciones para Ascender al Grado de Oficial'.

means, *la violencia* uses anomic or pathological means to open a channel.

We cannot state that the creation of an authentic ascent en masse by the regular military channel would prevent the formation of these unofficial armies. In conclusion, to repeat, the important thing is to see the general need for ascent, which – when normal channels are obstructed – will cause the peasants to look for abnormal routes to make that ascent. They do not consider the kind of channel to be important.

When we look at social change, we note that the very structures of this unofficial army of guerrillas changed the values, the attitude, and the conduct not only of those peasants who have joined that army but of those who have just had some contact with it. The guerrillas have imposed discipline requested by the peasants themselves. They have made authority more democratic and have given confidence and a sense of security to our rural communities, as we mentioned when we discussed the spirit of inferiority which has disappeared in the peasant areas where *la violencia* has manifested itself.

All these socio-cultural transformations of the peasant capacitate them as a pressure group to work for a general change of structures, as we will analyse further on.

Ecclesiastical Channel. In the underdeveloped countries of Latin America, the ecclesiastical channel for social ascent is comprised of the different ranks and offices established by the Catholic church. In view of the slight importance – social and institutional – of the other channels that depend on a religious institution, we will not take them into account at this time. Official ranks should be distinguished from those that correspond to the social scale as such. Within the latter we can establish the ranks of seminary student, chaplain, rural parish priest, urban parish priest of a worker's neighbourhood, urban parish priest of a residential neighbourhood,

monsignor or canon, auxiliary bishop, full bishop, archbishop, and cardinal.

Within each of the foregoing categories there can be considerable range of status. Nevertheless, in a tentative classification we propose the following as average for each stratum :

Seminary student	Lower middle class
Chaplain	Middle middle class
Rural parish priest	Middle middle class
Urban parish priest of a workers' neighbourhood	Middle middle class
Urban parish priest of a residential neighbourhood	Upper middle class
Monsignor or canon	Lower upper class
Auxiliary bishop	Middle upper class
Full bishop	Middle upper class
Archbishop	Middle upper class
Cardinal	Middle or upper upper class

The foregoing classification – like all classifications but especially sociological ones – can prove a bit arbitrary; in this case, it has the added disadvantage of being founded only on the observation of a participant. Nevertheless, what we are trying to state is that the ecclesiastical channel is a very efficacious channel for upward social mobility. This fact is made even more striking if we consider that the majority (in absolute terms) of the clergy are of rural social extraction. Nevertheless, since their rural social origin is middle middle class (merchants, small farmers, teachers), the beginning of an ecclesiastical career does not constitute an ascent.³²

One of the characteristics of the ecclesiastical channel is its relative independence of the economic channel. We believe that it is not a mistake to say that the ecclesiastical channel is the channel most independent of the economic minorities,

32. See Gustavo Pérez, *El Problema Sacerdotal en Colombia*, Madrid, Editorial Rivadeneira, 1962.

for the following reasons: there are low tuitions of the seminaries, upper as well as lower; the number of scholarship students is usually greater than the number of tuition-paying students. In the second factor the economic level has a certain degree of influence in that the preferred candidates for the scholarships are those whose social levels are high. The social level is closely linked to the economic and cultural level, as we described above.

The first stage of the ecclesiastical channel for social ascent – the seminary – is predominantly academic. This first ascent is usually accomplished from the primary school (apostolic school) through the university level (upper seminary). The criteria for ascent in this stage are predominantly those of intellectual capacity and conformist conduct.³³

In the next stages, the main criterion for ascent in the present structure of the Latin-American church is conformity. For example, in some countries the bishops are not elected unless the candidate is accepted by all the national bishops. This provision implies a uniformity of the candidates, principally on the basis of conformity.

We believe there are two reasons why the ecclesiastical channel is not used more as a channel of social ascent in Latin-American countries: the slowness of ascent in the first stage (from six to seven years of upper seminary); and the high educational mortality (in Colombia approximately 50 per cent of the enrolled students drop out during the first year of upper seminary). These limits make necessary a high degree of conformity and intellectual and emotional maturity in the individual's family or in the individual himself, if he is an adult candidate.

Entering a seminary presupposes a series of cultural goals (desires for change, progress, and leadership) that must be reached over a long period. These goals, as a rule, are found

33. Although in theory virtue is spoken of in the sense of self-control, in practice it is usually a matter of conformity.

not in the lower class but in the lower middle and general middle class.

At any rate, we can conclude that the ecclesiastical channel of social ascent is an efficacious channel in which the obstacles are more cultural than economic, political, or bureaucratic. Nevertheless, it is necessary to gauge how far-reaching is the effect of cultural blocks. The requisites of intellectual ability are objective requisites, although they are always limited by the kind of demand made. If the test is made based on a system inadequate for today's needs, passing that test does not represent efficiency as much as it does when the system is adequate.

In an underdeveloped country the requisite of conformity can bring about material social mobility and not socio-cultural mobility. In other words, an individual of the lower middle class, or even of the lower class, may become archbishop or cardinal. However, he may very well be tolerated in this position only at the price of absolute conformity to the values of the dominant minority. Thus, the ecclesiastical channel of social ascent proves to be more material than socio-cultural. This situation becomes still worse in those countries in which political power intervenes officially or unofficially in the appointment of bishops and general clergy of the church.

In the developed countries, too, change of class does not fail to imply a change of values. Nevertheless, in those countries it is not the condition *sine qua non* of the advancement, as it seems to be in the ecclesiastical channel in countries such as Colombia.

Obviously, the foregoing analysis is oversimplified. The economic factors – familial, political, cultural, and bureaucratic – act upon the ecclesiastical channel at various levels and in a variety of combinations. Here we want only to emphasize the characteristics that seem to be the main ones.

At the present time popular pressure has little influence over ascent by the ecclesiastical channel. It is true that the acceptance or rejection of a priest in a given community has some influence on his ascent. Nevertheless, it must be noted that before *la violencia*, the acceptance or rejection taken into account for social ascent or descent was not an acceptance or rejection by the majority of the community but fundamentally by the traditional or bureaucratic leaders of the community. It is common for a priest who is popular among the majority of his parish to be transferred because of pressure by an influential minority. This phenomenon used to occur especially because the majority of the peasants did not form a pressure group and because their attitude, especially in rural areas, towards the priest was passive and uncritical.

Naturally, due to the union of interests between the high hierarchy and the ruling class, one of the basic criteria for ecclesiastical ascent is conformity to the status quo, manifested on the local level by conformity to the minority ruling groups of the local community.

During *la violencia* we have witnessed the death of several priests,³⁴ as well as blasphemies and other sacrilegious acts, all of which reveal a change in the peasants' attitude towards ecclesiastical institutions. Very possibly, the peasants' disaffection for this institution was not uniquely produced by those elements of the clergy that in some way encouraged the killing of the peasants. It would be interesting to make a systematic study of the religious attitudes of the Colombian peasants in the areas of *la violencia*.

Nevertheless, as a working hypothesis, we can say that the Colombian peasants rejected the priests in those areas where they did not find the priest showing sincere solidarity with them. There may very well have been a change in the criteria for the priest's popularity in the rural communities. And it is not enough for him to be a good administrator or

34. Guzmán et al., *La Violencia en Colombia*, 2nd ed., p. 171.

not to do anything bad. The peasant must feel that his interests are defended by the priest.

If the majority of the peasants form a pressure group, over a long period of time the standards for ascent by the ecclesiastical channel will perhaps change. Nevertheless, for a fundamental change in the standards for ascent, the criteria of the hierarchy would have to cease being linked invariably to the standards and interests of the ruling classes and, thereby, maintaining the status quo. If, in addition to becoming the most effective pressure group by expression of their approval or rejection of the priest, the peasant group should come to provoke a divorce between the interests of the ruling class and the interests of the church, the ecclesiastical channel for social ascent would change fundamentally, imposing criteria based on the peasants' interests instead of criteria based on the interests of the ruling class.

In a country such as Colombia, where the religious institutions still have a great influence, nobody can ignore how important it would be for social change if the ecclesiastical leaders would abandon their present attitude and adopt in its stead an attitude based on the interests of the majority.

General Conclusions about the Various Channels for Social Ascent

1. In underdeveloped countries, in Latin America, and in Colombia in particular, the majority of the population finds the channels for social ascent blocked.

2. The economic factor is what most definitely conditions the blocking and control of all channels.

3. The minority of the population that controls the upward social mobility is interested in keeping the channels of ascent obstructed; therefore, conformity is an indispensable condition for achieving social ascent.

4. The upward social mobility is accomplished more in small groups than en masse. It is more material than socio-

cultural, and it therefore has no immediate effect on social change.

5. This immobility is more acute in the rural areas of these countries.

6. *La violencia* simultaneously produced class consciousness and abnormal instruments for social ascent.

7. The abnormal structures of ascent established by *la violencia* changed the attitudes of the Colombian peasants, transforming them into a majority pressure group.

Latent Aggressiveness

Aggressiveness can be individual or social. Individual aggressiveness results from a destructive urge rooted in frustration. Destruction is sought as a compensatory release and in the hope that the eventual reconstruction will present an opportunity to satisfy the unfulfilled desires that caused the frustration. In social aggressiveness the characteristics of individual aggressiveness are extended to the social group.

Aggressiveness can be manifest or latent, according to whether or not the desire for destruction can be carried out.

Social aggressiveness is usually found in those countries where aspirations are frustrated. If that frustration forms a part of the social consciousness and if violent and efficacious instruments of fulfilment are found within the social institutions,³⁵ the aggressiveness will become manifest.

According to the above explanation, in the rural areas of the developing countries, we find a great upward social immobility which would produce a frustration of aspirations if there were awareness of it. That awareness is acquired through an induced social change. When human communica-

³⁵ Fulfilment in the sense that T. Parsons explains 'performance'; T. Parsons, T. Bales, and E. A. Shils, *Working Papers in the Theory of Action*, Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1953; T. Parsons and N. J. Smelser, *Economy and Society*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956.

tions are extended and increased, the social consciousness increases, and when points of comparison are established, frustrations arise.

If there is an awareness of frustration but no institutional means of relieving those frustrations, the aggressiveness will remain in its latent state. If the efficacious institutional means are known and are within the present structures, the latent aggressiveness will be made manifest. This manifest aggressiveness will become greater at the rate at which there is greater awareness of the frustrations and in proportion to the way in which the instruments used against the structures are superior in efficiency to those used in support of the structures.

In the rural areas of Latin-American countries we find different degrees of frustration and of awareness and different combinations of normal and abnormal instruments (in agreement and in disagreement with the structures). In any case, the lack of social mobility in these areas is an element of latent aggressiveness.

Throughout the history of Colombia, the latent social aggressiveness has intermittently become manifest, from the time of pre-Spanish wars among the Indians through the subsequent struggles of the conquest, the uprisings of the colonial era, the War for Independence, subsequent civil wars, and the manifestations of violence that have been called political (like that of the year 1930), down to today's phenomenon of *la violencia* that we defined at the beginning of this study.

The above discussion of the variables has shown how *la violencia* introduced the following simultaneously: a sense of frustration; an intensification of the frustration; and the efficacious abnormal instruments to relieve the frustration. The armed action of the government forces was the element of induced social change by which the three foregoing effects were produced.

We can therefore state that the phenomenon common to

underdeveloped rural areas – described as latent aggressiveness – has been expressed in our peasant communities and has been converted into manifest aggressiveness through the **phenomenon of *la violencia***.

VARIABLES CHARACTERISTIC OF COLOMBIAN RURAL SOCIETY

Political Sectarianism

What has usually been called political sectarianism is a form of concrete group aggressiveness, aggressiveness of a group that is part of an organization exercising or trying to exercise governmental power. Besides the element of aggressiveness, we must include under the expression 'political sectarianism' the correlative notions of ingroup and outgroup security.

Every group affiliation is simultaneously cause and effect of every individual's need for security. The security function of the group will be more intense in the measure that there is greater insecurity outside the group. In the developed countries, besides, there exist institutions that guarantee social security in a way independent of group affiliation. Therefore, the need to belong to groups is much less in the developed countries than in ours. Since, furthermore, social aggressiveness is greater in the underdeveloped countries because the frustrations are, in general, greater, we can state that the political sectarianism is a by-product of the lack of socio-economic development.

In the countries not industrialized, the small minority that holds power constitutes a quite closed group in themselves (as we saw before) and has the greater degree of security inside society. The only way to lose this security would be through a structural change that would occasion the loss of **social control**.

Obviously, that change will come only from the majority of

the population, which cannot ascend. Thus, the very fact of being a minority constitutes an element of insecurity in case the majority shows itself discontent. Therefore, the minority needs some mechanism to satisfy the majority, maintain the structures, and, if possible, make it dangerous for any of these structures to be changed.

The political party can fulfil the above functions provided it meets certain requirements. In the first place, it must give a few concessions – enough to ward off discontent. In the second place, it must relate the concession to the maintenance of the structures. In the third place, it must create systems that would make it dangerous to change these structures.

The political party in Colombia is an instrument to satisfy certain needs of the majority of Colombians. Inasmuch as bureaucratic favours are important in an underdeveloped country (with mostly unskilled manpower), a high percentage of national income is allocated to administration and a few technical requirements on the part of that administrative system. And inasmuch as the bureaucratic favours are distributed by the political party, the party is an important source of livelihood for many Colombians. In other words, through their hopes of obtaining public jobs, there are more people dependent on the public jobs than the number who exercise them. Therefore, many Colombians depend directly or indirectly on the political party. Nevertheless, for their dependence on the party to be a guarantee that the socio-economic structures will be maintained, it is necessary to make them dependent on the ruling class.

For the party to be an adequate instrument for the preservation of this class, it has to be organized to include people of all social needs. Logically, if the affiliation brings neither technical nor rational advantages, it is necessary to look for sentimental motivations to justify it. Hence the traditional or sentimental basis of the party systems. The majority of the population could – in a more technical and rational way –

minister the bureaucratic favours which are distributed by the ruling class.

In order to assure that the structures will be maintained firmly and permanently, their collapse must entail a danger to the class that does not benefit from the status quo. Political sectarianism is the device by which the ruling class makes the majority feel an ingroup security proportional to an outgroup insecurity.

To summarize, the political party has functions as much for the ruling class as for the majority under that rule. For the ruling class it constitutes an element of conservation of the structures by offering party sentimentality and party sectarianism and by refusing to rebuild the parties along rational lines that would transform the structures by implanting majority rule.

For the class over whom rule is exercised, the social atmosphere of insecurity produces political sectarianism and the party constitutes a group of refuge, the only group capable of relating this class to the ruling class, the class with the source of security for themselves. The indispensable condition of the relationship has to be conformity to the party, a conformity that displays itself and roots itself more deeply with manifestations of sectarianism against the opposing party. Political sectarianism is, then, the two-edged sword that prods the majority to conform and thus guarantees the stability of the structures of the ruling class.

La violencia was unleashed as a device to serve sectarianism and to fulfil other functions that we have traced to it. Therefore, *la violencia* was produced not among the ruling classes but rather within the masses of peasants sentimentally divided into traditional parties and suffering a greater social insecurity that bound them even more tightly to these parties.

Therefore, too, even after the ruling classes made a political alliance, *la violencia* has been prolonged to ensure the continuation of the sectarianism necessary to prevent the

parties from being rebuilt along rational lines that would transform their structures. Under this system it is logical that any individual who risks disagreeing with the leaders of the traditional parties will be pushed aside and regarded almost as an outlaw.

It is significant that there came into being McCarthy-like societies made up of elements from the ruling classes of both parties. The stated, official purpose of these societies is to fight communism, and the unstated, unofficial purpose is to isolate every nonconformist individual or movement that appears on the political, social, or economic scene. *La violencia*, therefore, does not favour one political party or another. On occasions it can be more favourable to a minority party by balancing political forces that would be unequal at the polls. Nevertheless, *la violencia* fundamentally benefits the ruling class of any party, whatever the party may be.

All this notwithstanding, *la violencia* has started a social process that the ruling classes did not foresee. It has awakened the class consciousness of the peasant. It has given him group solidarity, a feeling of superiority, and confidence to act. It has opened possibilities for social ascent, and it has institutionalized aggressiveness, making the Colombian peasants begin to give their own interests precedence over the interests of the party. This will have the effect of constituting a social pressure group, economically and even politically capable of changing the structures in the way least expected and least desired by the ruling class. It is very possible that, due to *la violencia*, political sectarianism will be changed into class sectarianism; indeed, this has already occurred in many Colombian rural areas.

Lack of Class Consciousness

The present analysis does not purport to investigate the fine points of the definition of social class. For our purposes, a

generally accepted definition suffices. When we speak of the peasant class, we refer to a certain social group which has the lowest economic status within the Colombian society, which engages in an occupation inside the first sector of production, and which is predominantly located in the rural areas of the country. Class consciousness is a series of social relationships within the group thus defined – relations of a kind that excludes the outgroup. When this class consciousness is joined to initiative in – and organization for – group action, it is able to influence government decisions and, therefore, is able to become a pressure group.

In many underdeveloped countries, the peasants have been organized in various ways. In other Latin-American countries agrarian movements have had an importance that contrasts with their lack of importance in our country.

The most characteristic variables pointed out above – especially individualism and isolation – have kept the Colombian peasants from developing a class consciousness. At the same time, the cultural isolation of our country, together with backwardness in the technical installations of communications, have prevented the cultural interaction necessary for a social change that could create a class consciousness. The absence of contacts – and hence the lack of knowledge of groups of reference – has kept them unaware even of their own needs. The effect of the lack of upward social mobility has been the institutionalizing of fatalism about the solution of the few needs which they do recognize. Even where, for some circumstance, there is awareness of the needs and where fatalism may have been replaced by an attitude of initiative and action, generally they have become aware individually. Conflicts with the outgroup peasants have prevented the creation of rural solidarity, and political sectarianism has aggravated the disunity.

Even since the onset of *la violencia*, we can observe those rural communities that have neither directly nor indirectly

undergone its influence and find the characteristic lack of class consciousness, the defeatist attitude about progress, and the lack of collective security among the peasants.

As we consider how *la violencia* has resulted in the creation of class consciousness in the Colombian peasants, we can summarize the changes that have occurred in the other variables.

The excessive importance of the local neighbourhood, isolation, individualism, ingroup and outgroup conflicts, sense of inferiority, absence of vertical upward social mobility, latent aggressiveness – all imply a lack of class consciousness. By altering the aforementioned variables, *la violencia* begins to create a class consciousness, to generalize the social relationships among the peasants of almost the entire country, to make them aware that these relations are exclusively of the peasant group, and, furthermore, to provide solidarity for action by beginning to have unofficial influence in the government's decisions and, through political alliances, in the power structure. Overcoming the lack of class consciousness, the peasants are gradually forming a pressure group that will be definitive in the social change of the Colombian structures.

Respect for Private Property

From the various reports of the chroniclers of the Indies, the historians of the colonies, and the Latin-American historians, we can conclude that the most general form of property in the Indian native communities was the collective ownership of land. The Spanish colonization did not fundamentally affect the native mentality about property. The collective rural organizations continued under new ecclesiastical, military, or civil patterns.³⁶

36. For a study on the evolution of the concept of property in Colombia, consult Alfonso López Michelsen, *Introduction to the Study of the Constitution of Colombia*.

The emancipation movement introduced liberal ideas, among them the idea of private property as the basis for Colombian political or social structures. The respect for private property became part of the Colombian heritage of cultural values. Prior to *la violencia*, our peasants had a formal respect for private property, although that respect was occasionally not evident in their conduct. During *la violencia* the institution of *jus primo possidentis*³⁷ was introduced. Expropriations indemnized below value, invasions, control over harvest and markets, exercised by the guerrilla groups, made our peasants lose that cultural value that they had acquired in the last cycle.

In the communities where this phenomenon occurred, invasions of land have been organized with an ease that not only can be explained by economic pressure but, moreover, is based on the practice, during *la violencia*, of making use of other people's property for the immediate needs of survival. Although this effect of *la violencia* is secondary and apparently transitory, it is an important part of social change. If, as we saw above, the peasants are gradually forming a pressure group, it is important to recognize the cultural patterns of that group. If the respect for private property has ceased to be a factor within those patterns, it is very possible that, in the structural change the pressure of this group can achieve, the structure of property ownership will be attacked outright.

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, we can say that *la violencia* has constituted for Colombia the most important socio-cultural change in peasant areas since the conquest carried out by the Spanish.

Through the guerrillas, the rural communities have organized.

37. *La Violencia en Colombia*, 2nd ed.

ized themselves within a process of urbanization in the sociological sense, with all the elements implied : division of work, specialization, socio-cultural contact, socialization, mentality oriented towards change, awakening of social expectations, and the use of methods of action to realize a social mobility through channels the power structure had not foreseen. *La violencia*, furthermore, has established the systems necessary for the stratification of a revolutionary subculture, of a revolutionary peasant class, and of a revolutionary pressure group composed of this same class. Nevertheless, *la violencia* has wrought all these changes through pathological channels, without an orderly process of economic development of the country.

Although it is very difficult to make predictions, it is not at all probable that the present ruling class will make structural changes profound enough to engage all these anomic forces in a process of technically planned development. Nevertheless, the most recent régimes' orientation towards agrarian problems could result in the creation of a grass-roots leadership capable of directing the pressure of the peasants to the pursuit of objectives of social and economic development. If these pressures are exercised in a sufficiently technical and forceful way, they could change the structure of our ruling class, provided the ruling class is able to understand, in time, the danger of a transformation that will completely destroy it if it is unable to adapt itself to a social change that is inevitable.

12. The Integrated Man*

In a pluralistic society, with economic and social problems, should a Christian simply go on waiting, or should he begin to act if he finds himself overwhelmed by perplexity?

There are two objective realities – the natural and the supernatural. There are objective supernatural realities which we perceive by faith. Objective symbols of the supernatural include miracles and sacraments. All through sacred Scripture we find that water is the visible sign of purification, and in the New Testament it is the sign of conversion and the obtaining of eternal life. Natural realities are attained by reason, and supernatural realities are attained by faith.

But is it really possible to separate the natural from the supernatural? Can a Christian, possessing supernatural life and grace, exploit his fellow workers at the natural level? Can he condone dishonest political intervention?

We can know completely natural realities by observation and reason. We can know a man by observation when we see, hear, or touch him, because this is concrete, individual knowledge, sensory rather than intellectual. This is abstraction in the first degree. And then we can abstract certain elements concerning him: How big is he? How much does he weigh? How old is he? This becomes an abstraction in the second degree, even a mathematical abstraction. Still further, we can abstract the essence of the man, an abstraction in the third degree.

There are, therefore, three degrees or stages in acquiring knowledge: observation, reasoning and universal abstraction. The last will not vary even though the data obtained in the

* [Lecture delivered in the theatre of Radio Sutatenza, Bogotá, September 1963, MS. – Ed.]

first two stages of knowledge may be different. If there is any variation, it is because they were not authentic or, more probably, because the search for these data was not carried far enough.

When we consider a man's essence, which is a universal and ultimate abstraction, it does not matter whether the men we observe are young or old; tall or short; handsome or ugly; yellow, white, or black. An abstraction in the first degree reveals the scientific laws which give us the constants of the observable realities that exist or occur among beings and are attained through systematic observation. Logical reasoning can then follow, and this, in turn, will enable us to reach a generalization that gives us physical certainty which will not be altered by individual changes. Consequently, our philosophy can be immutable and adaptable to our faith. A Christian philosophy can be defined as one which arrives at universal principles that are not contrary to revealed truth.

In this field we can therefore possess a community of ideas with all men, whether Christian or not, who share this same philosophy with us. When we accept universal philosophical principles that are not obtained through faith, we enter into communion with non-Christians, materialists, atheistic idealists (Hegelians), pantheists, and many others. Quite obviously, if there is a natural reality different from supernatural reality, then knowledge of the natural, reached through observation, reasoning, and generalization, is not specifically in the possession of Christians but is common to all men (for example, at the level of scientific laws); thus, our achievement of solidarity with the greater part of mankind becomes much easier.

The social sciences are no longer merely speculative; they are beginning to be positive. They have abandoned universals in order to become inductive. Their point of departure is systematic observation which enables them to attain to a logical generalization of constants. As an example, any

human group involved in conflict becomes much more united in spite of its variables at the economic, cultural, and other levels. Now the social sciences are acquiring the status of positive sciences, adhering entirely to the field of observation and experimentation. And if we take action based upon irrefutable facts (which only a lunatic could deny), we will enter into community and agreement with most of mankind, whether Christian or not.

In conclusion, then, as Christians we may affirm once again that in our knowledge of natural realities we can and must be in agreement with an immense part of mankind.

There are distinct kinds of knowledge, both natural and supernatural. Man was created in the image and likeness of God. In the design of God, man should be supernatural, but if man is not so because he lacks grace, he has a supernatural vocation nevertheless. Man's nature has been raised to supernature, and therefore man is able to act supernaturally. But the supernatural is not superimposed upon man like a hat. It is united substantially with the natural. This unity exists in man, in Christ, and in God. Our use of natural things implies supernatural acts if we are raised to the dignity of sons of God. For Christians, everything is supernatural. Our action results in supernatural acts; we do not supernaturalize things.

A Christian, receiving grace and living supernaturally, is meritorious, even if, because of his abilities and opportunities, he does not attain very full knowledge or very solid truth. But for the non-Christian, this is not so, because even if his knowledge is more valid, his life is not meritorious because he lacks the supernatural life. The non-Christian physician, for example, can be a better physician than one who is Christian. The same can be said of the philosopher, the chemist, and the artist.

Integrated reality consists in making the supernatural itself convey greater efficacy than the natural. In natural matters,

however, in being natural, the Christian as Christian is not more efficacious. In science, politics, and economics, the discoveries of non-Christians can be more efficacious than the findings of Christians.

Man is an integrated reality, naturally and supernaturally. How can we distinguish those who act supernaturally or those who possess grace? We cannot say that all who fill the churches, going to Mass and Communion every Sunday, necessarily possess grace. Love is the indication or sign that justifies our presumption that they possess grace.

The Christian loves, and this love distinguishes and defines him. External practices serve as a means of attaining love, and they should in turn be motivated by love. Such practices without love have not validity. The non-Christian who loves and is seeking in good faith possesses grace. He is labouring supernaturally and is a son of God. On the other hand, the Christian who carries out the external practices without love is not Christian. The integrated man, from the material and spiritual standpoint, and in the natural and supernatural perspective, should be someone who loves.

In view of these things, what should a Christian perceive in the natural? In all that is natural and temporal, Christians are not different from others. But we have an obligation to be better and thus to differentiate ourselves. Love is our moral imperative, and if it is real, it ought to be integrally efficacious, both in the natural and the supernatural sense. If we are not efficacious, if our lives produce no fruit (for by this we shall be known), we are not loving. Consequently, the temporal commitment of the Christian is a mandate of love. He must strive efficaciously to become an integrated man materially and spiritually, naturally and supernaturally. In the natural sphere the Christian is distinguished by his way of loving in the manner and through the impulse of Christ. 'Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends' (John xv, 13). If the Christian seeks this

greater love, he will attain the greatest efficacy in all things, whether speculative or positive.

Through the levels already mentioned, we are in agreement with non-Christians. But only if they love can we know whether they stand with us or not, and as Christians we must go on loving to such an extent that we become more and more closely united with mankind.

13. How Pressure Groups Influence the Government*

A pressure group is composed of individuals who together determine the decisions of national policy. They are a specialized society, but pressure groups do not necessarily exercise power in a formal manner. Yet there can be functionaries and bureaucrats in public positions who belong to these groups and exercise power officially in the interests of the pressure groups.

Consequently, real power is vested in groups of this kind. The real power will be democratic if the pressure groups represent majorities and will be oligarchical if these same groups represent minorities. In Colombia access to the pressure groups is controlled by a small minority that constitutes the only real pressure group, because the really important decisions to maintain effective structures are dependent upon this group. And this small minority pressure group, by means of economic power and the requirement of conformity, controls the other powers, whether cultural, political, bureaucratic, military, or ecclesiastical.

* [Résumé by Torres of his participation in a round-table discussion on pressure groups at the 1964 meeting of the Alumni Association of the University of the Andes, Bogotá, MS. - Ed.]

The concentration of economic power in Colombia is obvious. Statistics concerning the bad distribution of our national income and per capita income, the deplorable division of land tenure, among other injustices, are widely known. To gain access to cultural power, one must first possess economic power, because of the structure of our educational institutions.

The upward climb into the ranks of the political hierarchies requires both conformity with those financially powerful and a minimum cultural level. Bureaucratic power also requires this cultural minimum and even greater conformity because the upward ascent through bureaucratic channels in Colombia depends upon the judgement and decision of the bureaucratic superiors, and these men cannot maintain their own public status if they are not in conformity and agreement with those who hold economic power.

Military power in our country can only be justified as the defender and upholder of enforced structures and, in the final analysis, of the economic power. The latter repays or compensates the military men with financial, social, or even political privileges, as circumstances may require. These correspond to their conformity with the established order.

The ecclesiastical power in our country is united to the financial and political powers because all possess interests in common. The conformity of ecclesiastics lends support to ensure the maintenance of these interests.

The popular classes, comprising the large majorities, do not constitute pressure groups because they do not possess an awareness of their common needs or a unity of action. They have no organization that is national in scope, not even a minimum of common political objectives. If the majorities fail to obtain these requisites, Colombia will never become a real democracy.

14. Science and Dialogue*

During one of the most significant periods of the Cold War, a conference was held in Geneva to determine systems for the control of armaments and nuclear forces. At this conference American and Soviet scientists reached an agreement. Controversy arose when an attempt was made to specify the policy that should be adopted in the use of controls over those who had established the agreement.

The positive sciences, whose conclusions can be verified by positive observation, are an instrument of union and dialogue between persons of different ideologies.

The social sciences, until the end of the last century, had been considered speculative and normative sciences. They were not to provide abstract principles, universal and metaphysical definitions, or any value judgements for concrete action. It was claimed that all the social sciences should utilize absolute categories and that they should define absolute truths concerning society and declare what was good or bad in politics, economics, administration, social assistance, and so forth. Absolute theories about society flooded the literature of the end of the last and beginning of the present century. It was the high point of social philosophy. Comte and Marx were the two classical exponents of this movement.

Nevertheless, during this same period certain positive scientists began to appear within the social disciplines. They became aware that society was an objective reality that could be examined without recourse to value judgements or metaphysical abstractions. Many of these scientists embraced positivism, which is a philosophical position. As often happens, the discovery of the usefulness and worth of the

* [MS, 1964. - Ed.]

positive and of the empirically observable quite dazzled the discoverers, and they began to insist on generalizations. They would only admit what could be verified by the senses. In the face of this gratuitous generalization, there was a reaction, if not of opposition, at least of much distrust in the positive social sciences.

Those whose cultural conditioning imbued them with high respect for the speculative values felt that they had been personally injured. In this kind of cultural environment, as, for instance, among the Latin peoples, the positive sciences were regarded with suspicion; and for this reason, among others, they were neglected. The positive focus of the social sciences was simply suppressed in extreme reaction.

In Colombia, we resented this reaction profoundly. Culturally, the speculative and normative values hold a very high place. This explains the flowering of philosophers, political leaders, and moralists among our intelligentsia. It was a necessary and constructive flowering, but an inadequate one for integral progress that is both spiritual and material.

The social scientists who were trying to undertake positive analyses of social reality gradually abandoned their positive philosophical positions, for the affirmation of the empirical did not imply a denial of the speculative. At this time the non-positive scientists whose ideologies were speculative found entry into the domain of positive social science. A different ideology did not hinder exact agreement in the observation and analysis of the same reality. Nevertheless, empirical objectivity does require a particular intellectual and temperamental approach.

An approach of this kind is very difficult to acquire except by slow process, together with a university discipline oriented in this way. It is an approach that must not seek to deprive anyone of his particular beliefs or his value judgments. And it must also prevent any deformation of the objective analysis by these beliefs and judgments. In Colom-

bia members of the teaching profession who stress this focusing on objectivity in the social sciences are quite new in the field. Graduates within this discipline are still few and far between.

However, the popular masses, especially in foreign countries, who have contributed to positive social science have not been wholly alien to those who have traditionally been concerned about social problems in our country, that is, political leaders, lawyers, and moralists. These men have made the laborious effort of learning foreign languages, thus making up for whatever was lacking in the supply of translations or original books in Spanish. If they did not always translate a whole book, they at least translated complete passages, even from the German, with the purpose of understanding new orientations and explaining these to fellow citizens without the same linguistic facilities. But this is not enough. It is very difficult to become autodidactic in those disciplines in which there is need not only for knowledge but also for a different approach and mental discipline.

When they confront certain analyses that do not claim to be philosophical or normative, our autodidactic scientists always react by demanding 'that the author declare himself'. They say that he should not limit himself to analysing and expounding: he should say whether something is good or bad and whether it is in accordance with metaphysical truths or not. This requirement shows that it is not enough to have done some reading in order to change a mental attitude. Books are not enough. What is needed is a process, a discipline, and an intellectual approach.

It is clearly apparent that defining a situation or describing a reality is insufficient in solving a problem. But it is also certain that nothing will be seriously solved without objective knowledge of the problem's fundamental elements. And this is precisely the groundwork of the sociologist.

Politics and philosophy divide the modern world into

antagonistic and radical forces. Social problems and their solutions are the source and root of the conflict. Why do they not seek a point of contact and a vehicle of dialogue in objective and scientific analyses of reality? Only the enemies of sincere dialogue are opposed to these positive scientific disciplines. They are enemies of dialogue because of their ignorance and their desire to preserve their privileges. They do not want to lose control over those who are trying to develop a science that does not depend on the traditional categories, even though their own position is not threatened.

If realistic discoveries are made, do these not help political leaders, moralists, and others to find better solutions in agreement with everyone's ideology? After all, what difference does it make whether reality is discovered by a farmer, a politician, a military man, or a priest? Positive reality can be discovered by individuals regardless of occupational or ideological differences. And if something is discovered which can be verified by experiment and inquiry, should it be kept secret simply because people are not accustomed to the presentation of discoveries until value judgements are added to them?

It is certain that truth gives us freedom: '... the truth shall make you free,' Jesus said (John viii, 32). And the freedom of certain social theories, if wholly submitted, can seem dangerous to those who are in power. We must let our priests, military men, lawyers, and all our citizens try to analyse our society. We should enter into discussion with them about the truth of these analyses. Both politics and morality should be based on study rather than intuition.

Let God judge intentions, and let us utilize all the approaches and discoveries which will lead us to truth. The distinction between positive and normative sciences is precisely what prompts us to demand that all ideologies be scientific, joined together by empirical verifications that no one can deny or reject. This union centred around the posi-

tive is the beginning of a dialogue that does not imply further factional divisions. It does not presuppose any victors or vanquished. It can be a source of peace.

15. Two Subcultures*

A country's lack of real leaders is all the more apparent when the problems confronting society are especially massive and complex. These problems are so obvious that they cannot be avoided, and because of their complexity they unmask the ineptitude of the political leaders, not merely in their attempts to solve them but even in their efforts to discuss them.

The recent verbal display of our political leaders and our newspapers was a sad spectacle of incontinence, unrealistic outlook, ignorance, and, therefore, irresponsibility. The elusive will-o'-the-wisp of tropical eloquence brings to mind, within a different cultural setting, those decadent courts of the Renaissance, when national leaders and representatives spent their time participating in amateur plays, charades, and pantomimes while the people struggled in wretched poverty. When these leaders finally awoke from their irresponsible degeneracy, they found themselves facing the gallows.

The verbal battle in our country has centred around three topics, discussed in the superficial manner of a decadent class. They touch upon violence, pressure groups, and structural changes. It is not possible today to require a politician to be a specialist. But neither should he be allowed to discuss any subjects with total intellectual irresponsibility. At the very least he ought to be required to consult an expert, a book, or at any rate a dictionary!

* [MS, 1964. - Ed.]

A COMPLEX SYMPTOM

Violence is a very complex symptom. Sociologists, psychologists, and criminologists have examined it from different perspectives and have done scholarly research that is scientifically valuable. Violence is the complex symptom of a social situation that can only be explained in terms of many factors. But our political leaders try to cope with it, both in theory and in practice, with excessive simplicity. There is groundless dogmatizing about it. And when some study or essay appears which, although not perfect, at least tries to be scientific, it is judged from the standpoint of sentimental and anachronistic political traditions. When there is talk about pressure groups, not even a dictionary of sociology is consulted. The real meaning of the term is not known. It is simply taken to be a Marxist expression or a combat slogan. And it is only to defend or attack pressure groups that they are mentioned at all, never to analyse or improve them.

The 'structures of reform' are not specified or defined. This term is now entering into demagogic jargon like the word 'oligarchy' or the expression proclaiming 'moral restoration of the republic'. Since neither the ends nor the means are specified precisely, our political discussions continue whirling around unscientific verbalism that is lacking seriousness and realism.

THE TWO SUBCULTURES

How shall we explain the irresponsible attitude of those who have the obligation to resolve problems that can no longer be postponed?

It is possible that in Colombia there are two incipient subcultures that are gradually becoming more independent, dissimilar, and antagonistic. One of these subcultures derives

from an educated class, those having an annual per capita income of over 3,000 (US) dollars. Their buying habits can be defined in terms of industrial consumption. They represent approximately 15 per cent of our population. The other class, more or less illiterate and rural, possesses an archaic subculture. They constitute the remaining 85 per cent of the population of Colombia. Each has its own system of values, behaviour, and attitudes, which are now becoming antagonistic. Whatever communication there is between these two classes is breaking down.

DIFFERENT MEANINGS

The same expressions have different meanings for each class. The following list is hypothetical, but it could be verified and demonstrated by direct research.

<i>Expressions</i>	<i>Connotation for the Upper Class</i>	<i>Connotation for the Lower Class</i>
Oligarchy	Insult	Privilege
Violence	Banditry	Nonconformity
Pressure groups	Chosen caste	Exploiters
Revolution	Immoral subversion	Constructive change
Change of structures	Revolution	Fundamental changes
Agrarian reform	Illegal expropriation	Acquisition of land by the poor
Political parties	Democratic political groups	Oligarchies
Social sensibility	Popular attitude	Paternalism
The press	Fourth estate	News monopoly
Black Hand	Centre of studies and social action	A sinister secret society
Trade unions	Conflicts between classes	Vindication
Communal action	'Peaceful' solution	Local organization
Left	Subversion	Nonconformity
Communism	Crime	Revolution
Capitalism	Economic system	Exploitation

Imperialism	Marxist slogan	'Gringo' influence
Fidel Castro	Communist leader	Revolutionary chief
Devaluation	Economic measure	Poverty
National Front	Political unity	Union of oligarchies
Alliance for Progress	North American aid	Imperialism
Church	Institution for preservation of order	Reactionary force
Army	Utilizable force	Violence
Bureaucracy	Administration	Parasites of the state
Parliament	Democracy	Parasites of the people
Pacification	Repression of delinquents	Death of guerrilla fighters
Peace Corps	Voluntary altruists	Tourists or spies

This list is highly arbitrary and could continue interminably. However, it shows how class values can be polarized. Moreover, the systems of communication between the two classes become ever more precarious, because the absence of common expressions make dialogue impossible and the lack of dialogue engenders incomprehension. When a cultural barrier of this kind arises, simple common sense is not sufficient to overcome it. Real contacts must be made in order to re-establish a dialogue. There can be contacts of all kinds, and among the principal means of effectuating them are participation, observation, and scientific research.

Unfortunately, however, neither one of the two classes is able to utilize these methods, because the lower class lacks access to the upper classes and adequate education, while the upper class is hindered by isolation and by its superficial analyses. This isolation is conscious or unconscious. Even those who travel around the country for political, technical, or other reasons are received by the local circle of bureaucrats who isolate them from any possible contact with the spokesmen of the lower class. Nevertheless, the popular class in Colombia has been steadily renouncing mere talk and is now interested only in deeds. Some political leaders are aware of this and in their campaigns refer to their past

achievements. But the electoral abstention in recent elections reveals the scepticism of many Colombians.

A UNITED FRONT

If our popular leaders do not fashion a united front which discards the personalism that arouses so much suspicion among the people and if leftist chatter, which is almost as stupid as the babbling of the ruling class, is not soon ended, the popular class will no longer keep in step.

Only deeds and facts will abolish this lower class and re-constitute it as a majority pressure group. It will be a group exerting pressure through action, and it will reveal to our present leaders all that they could not grasp or achieve for lack of realism, of skill, of responsibility, and, above all, of dialogue. Through pressure, they will compel the ruling class to make real contact with the people and enlist the collaboration of scholars who are trying to make a scientific study of the attitudes, values, terminology, and institutions of the lower class.

This contact and collaboration are indispensable prerequisites for acquiring an awareness of the difference in lingual expressions and general culture and for overcoming this difference. A common lingual terminology can thus be established as an irreplaceable basis for solving the problems of the majorities by those minorities that now hold the responsibility of power.

16. Revolution: Christian Imperative*

The Essence of the Christian Apostolate

To determine the essence of the Christian apostolate we must determine precisely two aspects: the ontological and the epistemological. In other words, we must define what is meant by the Christian apostolate and how we can recognize it.

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN APOSTOLATE?

Christ is the apostle par excellence. If we define the essence of His mission, we will be defining the essence of the Christian apostolate. The Christian apostolate is an activity whose purpose is to establish and extend the kingdom of God.

God endowed Christ with power 'in order that to all thou hast given him he may give everlasting life' (John xvii, 2). In the Gospel of John, we find that the words 'life' and 'eternal life' are used in the same sense as Matthew speaks of the 'kingdom of God' and as Paul refers to 'justice'.¹ This identification, moreover, is quite legitimate, since the kingdom of God consists of possessing this life itself. Christ came so that the sheep of his fold 'may have life, and have it more abundantly' (John x, 10). Consequently, the essence of the apostolate

* [Read in French by Torres at the Second International Congress of Pro Mundi Vita in Louvain in September 1964 and published by Pro Mundi Vita in 1965 under the title 'Programmation Économique et Exigences Apostoliques'. - Ed.]

1. Alfred Durand, *L'Évangile selon Saint Jean, Verbum Salutis*, Paris, 1927, p. 77.

late is to labour for all men to have supernatural life and have it abundantly.

HOW CAN WE RECOGNIZE THE CHRISTIAN APOSTOLATE?

Apostolic work consists of everything that leads others to possess supernatural life. This work is always efficacious, even if its results are not visible. The ultimate and essential result is invisible because it consists of supernatural life itself. There are, however, various indications of the existence of supernatural life which condition apostolic activity. It is important that apostolic activity is guided and directed so that it will produce these indications as means rather than as ends. There is an external factor which is both an indispensable indication and a condition of apostolic activity – the manifestation of love for one's neighbour. If this manifestation is inspired by supernatural life, in addition to being an indication and condition *sine qua non*, it becomes an end and purpose of apostolic activity. We shall explain this statement when we clarify other indications of the existence of supernatural life and, therefore, the proper means of the Christian apostolate.

The ordinary means to obtain supernatural life are foretold in sacred Scripture and in the practice of the church: prayer, the sacraments, and the Mass. However, the utilization of these means, although a good sign of the existence of supernatural life, does not give absolute certainty of this existence without a special revelation. These means can be used in practice without charity; and if there is no charity, they are not signs of supernatural life.

Profession of faith in God and in Jesus Christ can also indicate the possession of supernatural life: 'Now this is everlasting life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ' (John xvii, 3).

Nevertheless, one can hold and profess the faith without possessing this supernatural life: 'and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, yet do not have charity, I am nothing' (1 Corinthians xiii, 2). If a Christian does not have charity, it serves no purpose for him to manifest all the signs of possessing supernatural life. But if he has charity, he has everything, 'for he who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the Law' (Romans xiii, 8). Love, therefore, 'is the fulfilment of the Law' (Romans xiii, 10).

We cannot have supernatural life without charity, and our charity must be efficacious. Charity is essentially supernatural life. But if we are to have real charity, real love must necessarily exist in our hearts. The good works we do to help our neighbour are indispensable if this love is to be authentic. Therefore, efficacious charity is not charity at all. 'By their fruits you will know them' (Matthew vii, 16). 'And if a brother or a sister be naked and in want of daily food, and one of you say to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," yet you do not give them what is necessary for the body, what does it profit?' (James ii, 15-16). God's judgement on men is fundamentally based on the efficacy of our charity. In the final judgement (Matthew xxv, 31 ff.) our eternal destiny will be determined in so far as we have given food, drink, lodging, clothing, refuge, and welcome to our brothers.

In conclusion, we can say with certainty that there is no supernatural life in persons who have the faculty of reason if good works in helping our neighbour are lacking. These works, both material and spiritual, are not in themselves absolutely certain signs of the existence of supernatural life. There can be other good works that are not supernatural. To become supernatural, they must necessarily be performed by someone in the state of grace, and this requires that the person have faith, even if it is only implicit. Anyone who acts in good faith can be saved. It is not certain that outside the church there can be no grace or that the only way to

belong to the church is through formal reception of the sacraments. There can be a baptism of desire and a penance of desire. Therefore, supernatural life can exist even without explicit faith or any formal reception of sacraments. On the other hand, there can be no supernatural life in rational individuals if no good works are performed to help our neighbour.

This is not a problem of exclusion, but rather of priorities in policies and procedures in apostolic action. In a word, it is a problem of pastoral methods.

We know that the sacraments produce supernatural life. But external reception is not necessary for *in voto* sacraments. We know, however, that good works to help our neighbour, both spiritually and materially, are definitely indispensable for supernatural life.

Apostolic action can be limited to reception of the sacraments. However, the practice of receiving the sacraments without performing good works is worth nothing. There can also be a concentration on good works, but without grace these works are not meritorious either. A good pastoral method with the sacraments as its starting point should culminate in works of charity, and a good pastoral method which begins with works of charity should culminate in the sacraments.

The only difference, but a most important one, is that reception of the sacraments does not presuppose good works. It is necessary to prove that there are good works, even though they are wholly interior, if we are to presume that there is supernatural life: 'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren' (1 John iii, 14). On the other hand, good works, whether internal or external, in behalf of one's neighbour, must be presumed as something performed by supernatural love. To presume the existence of supernatural life, one must believe that everybody is acting in good faith, so long as the opposite is not apparent.

Both ways are legitimate. However, insistence on good works seems more effective than insistence on the sacraments. But we cannot judge abstractly that someone who apparently has only received the sacraments has not performed good works. They may be unknown to us or unknowable (interior); he may indeed manifest love for his neighbour.

What we are trying to clarify is the priority and the emphasis which everyone engaged in apostolic action should give to good works. This priority becomes more clearly apparent when considered in the light of two historical circumstances of our time: the social problem and pluralism. These are circumstances, moreover, which should orient pastoral action.

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

On many occasions the social problem of our time has been defined from the Christian standpoint by the popes and by various authors. Material poverty is an unquestionable element in these definitions. It is not an exclusive factor, but it is a basic consideration if we are to understand the problem and solve it. In the modern world it is impossible to be a Christian if we do not fully understand the problem of material poverty; to solve this problem, the assistance of all men is needed. Consequently, it is only in cases of special vocation or exceptional personal circumstances that we can exempt Christians from external and material good works in the modern world. As a general policy, the apostolate should give priority to material works to help our fellow men; it is thus centred in a perspective of active charity here and now.

PLURALISM

Pluralism has also been recognized as a characteristic of modern society. This pluralism is both ideological and institu-

tional. The religious, philosophical, and political systems which are opposed to pluralism have had to face the reality of its coexistence. This is an easier and less costly solution than mutual elimination. Coexistence can only be established on the basis of points in common. Action programmes offer an important number of common points. But action in behalf of men, and carried out by men, is never totally good or totally evil. When it really occurs, passing from mere projects to accomplished realities, it becomes a challenge to the consciences of all those who are seeking the good of humanity. The challenge of action is quite demanding; either we accept a programme of action which implies acceptance of whatever inevitable defects there may be, or we reject it, which means that we are discarding the advantages and gains which it undeniably must also offer.

However, this action is something concrete. The variables which condition it are controllable, for the most part, by objective observation. Facts do not lend themselves to debate. Furthermore, this action, as service to others, has risen among the values of the modern world to the highest place. Both Christians and non-Christians accord first priority to it. The differences are in the means, the modalities, and the ultimate ends. But the principle of love of neighbour is not debatable. It is an essential element of Christianity and constitutes an element held in common by all men. We might perhaps say that in non-Christians this principle is natural in origin rather than formally Christian. But to make this statement, we would have to prove the bad faith professed by non-Christians, even when they are performing benevolent good works for their neighbour. If the Christian apostle concentrates his energies primarily but not exclusively on inspiring everyone to perform works of love for all men, he is then insisting on a value that is universally accepted and that constitutes a sign of the existence of supernatural life.

In a pluralistic world, united action in assisting other men is a unity which we may presume to be fundamentally Christian. Pope John XXIII affirmed this criterion in the encyclical *Pacem in terris*.

The forms, conditions, and circumstances of this unity will be considered later in our study. For the moment, we need only stress the importance of insisting on external works in helping our neighbour as necessary for the apostle who must act in a pluralistic society. Benevolent works for our neighbour, from the theological point of view, constitute one of the surest signs of the existence of supernatural life. And from the pastoral standpoint, these good works constitute the most important objective for the apostle who lives in a pluralistic society with social problems.

Factors of Economic Programming in Underdeveloped Countries

CONCEPTS

The concept of economic programming must be clearly explained in order to enter into any consideration of it. Every programme presupposes foresight of the future. It assumes that there is a plan. That is why it is necessary to define what we mean by economic planning and how programming can be synonymous with planning.

Economic programming can be based on foresight which in no way assures fulfilment. But it can also be part of economic planning. In our present study it will be considered in this sense, and consequently we shall try to go deeply into the concept of planning. Economic planning comprises all the means and ends that are chosen for development of the goods and services of a particular society.

Economic planning can vary from one community to

another, from one country to another, and from one socio-economic region to another. It can also vary with systems and the kinds of authority which do the planning and execution. The variables differ in a socialistic country and in a capitalistic country; they differ in a country that is developed and in one that is developing.

PLANNING IN SOCIALISTIC COUNTRIES

Planning in socialistic countries was the result more of needs than of a policy premeditated by Marxist experts. The Soviet Union had to take into account from the very beginning of the socialistic system the penury of raw materials. It was necessary to centralize their distribution. This centralization and distribution in turn required a centralization of information. The work of the Council of National Economy, created by Lenin on 5 February 1918, was at first limited to the industrial application of the statistical questionnaires already utilized for agriculture over a long period in other countries. The government's Opportunity Service made projections and predictions at the national level, which gradually were changed into directives. The Gosplan, a commission for state planning, began in 1923 to prepare five-year plans for the metallurgical industry and the transportation services.

It was not until fifteen years later that the methods and theory for national planning were definitely established. It should be noted, however, that at the beginning the planning was carried out in keeping with the private ownership of most of the means of production. Therefore, it was not very different from the planning now undertaken in capitalistic countries. It was only when the state controlled the principal means of production that it could begin planning with truly compelling power.

There has been much discussion concerning the possible economic evolution of Russia if it had remained within the

capitalistic system that was developing in the rest of Europe. However, this kind of thinking is unrealistic. We must abide by the facts and analyse them as they occurred historically. The Soviet Union, largely because of its system of economic planning, with state control of the means of production, has now become at least the second greatest economic power in the world, although it began as an underdeveloped country in the year 1917.

To what can we primarily attribute this development? Without overly restricting ourselves to the Marxist theory of plus value, it can be stated that the Soviet Union has utilized in a progressive manner and almost in its totality the profits of national production for common purposes and projects that were technically planned. This result has a close causal connection to Marxist theory.

However, it is fitting to ask to what extent any other ideology, as for example an ideology of the spiritual type, could have inspired similar economic effects, and to what degree materialist principles are involved in the authoritarian orientation of investments. At the end of this chapter this problem will be considered.

PLANNING IN CAPITALISTIC COUNTRIES

Before the last world war, capitalistic planning at the national level could only be found in Germany. With the exception of partial plans, it is only since that period that we find national economic planning in almost every country. The late appearance of this kind of planning can be attributed to the following causes:

1. Sufficient resources of raw materials.
2. The absence of regional integration, as demonstrated for instance in the European Common Market.
3. The lack of generalized planning at the company and local levels.

4. The absence of statistical data sufficiently complete and accurate.

5. The absence of a sufficiently interventionist conception of the state.

Economic planning in capitalistic countries, as in socialistic countries, is an effect of economic development and of competition. However, in the capitalistic countries, which we are now considering, the characteristics of planning are still very different from those prevalent in socialistic countries. 'Production in a liberal system would be more in terms of private interests than general needs to which they are adapted only with difficulty,' according to Campion.² In spite of this, we should note the manner in which general needs have been progressively more taken into account in capitalistic countries. In order to continue with this analysis, we should give some consideration to the evolution of the political structure of these same countries.

Soon after democratic régimes were established, the minority pressure groups oriented the economic policy. Economic development brought with it a social development characterized by an elevation of the cultural and economic levels of the majority groups. Marxist doctrine and the Social-Christian movement nourished the formation of popular organizations. The scarcity, first, of skilled labour and, later, of a national work force in general made the national labour organizations more powerful.

With the rise in national income came an apparent elevation, although not proportionate, of the economic level of the majority groups. This facilitated the increase of the educational level and of cooperatives of every kind among these same groups which began to exercise various and effective pressures on governmental organs. The play of forces between

2. Planification: *Dictionnaire des Sciences Economiques*, Paris, 1958.

the minorities as holders of the economic power and the organized majorities became more equitable. Private interests became more general. Naturally, this occurred within national boundaries, because in international policy the interests of the indigent countries were sacrificed to those of the rich countries. Lenin's prediction began to come true: national capitalism was changed into international imperialism.

The characteristic which fundamentally differentiates capitalistic planning from socialistic planning is the degree of control over investments and the rapidity with which such control is acquired. At the present time the control of investments in capitalistic countries, accomplished by indirect systems such as taxation, credit, and subsidies, is quite generalized. However, it never reaches the degree of intensity attained in the socialistic countries. And private interests, although subject to intervention, are still very influential in political and economic decisions in general.

It is certain that the acquisition of control in socialistic countries required a process of several years. Nevertheless, the orientation towards common interests and the technical standard were dominant from the start, and the process was evidently of shorter duration.

PLANNING IN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Indigent countries have been called underdeveloped countries, developing countries, or countries moving towards development. The various designations have finally acquired a euphemistic character more in accordance with paternalism than with any technical standard. There are, of course, various degrees and stages of underdevelopment. However, an underdeveloped country is different from a developing country. The former is structurally unable to develop itself. The latter has already passed beyond the starting point of

development. If the opposite were true, it could not be called a developing country.

Planning in underdeveloped countries must now take advantage of the acquired experience of both the capitalistic countries and the socialistic countries. In fact, the underdeveloped countries are now attempting the establishment of economic planning. In many of them, there are state planning units which are executing this economic planning with very little efficiency. Administrative formulas are proposed, experts assembled, and congresses held, all for the purpose of improving these efforts. However, it is essential that structural deficiencies are carefully studied because they create obstacles in these countries which prevent authentic and effective economic planning beneficial to the majority. Among these deficiencies there are two kinds of obstacles: the economic and the social. We shall take note of the principal obstacles: lack of productive investments, lack of technical personnel, and lack of a policy of development.

Lack of Productive Investments

Investments can be obtained from national capital or from foreign countries. The productive investments derived from national capital are difficult to obtain spontaneously. In the first place, national capital is scarce, since savings are small because incomes are low. Moreover, capital is invested by preference in countries in which the currency is stable and in which there are greater institutional securities, that is, in industrialized and developed countries. These factors create vicious circles that are difficult to break.

Furthermore, investments in consumer and luxury goods are not planned and they are not always the most productive. Unfortunately, they are the most popular in the underdeveloped countries. In these countries it is impossible to

make any productive investments if they depend on private initiative.

In the investment of foreign capital, the political factor is determinant. The division of the world into two camps, capitalistic and socialistic, means that the underdeveloped countries that are aligned with the one or the other are subjected to a monopoly of external financing. The lack of competition which this polarization entails puts the underdeveloped countries unconditionally in a state of dependence on the investing country.

The planning of investments, whether national or foreign, now requires that they are done on the supranational level. All the underdeveloped countries hope to acquire their economic independence with the help of industrialization. Almost all of them also seek to possess heavy industry on a national scale. However, the isolated efforts of each nation can become uneconomical. Through regional integration, a study could be made of the kind of investments that would be most productive; perhaps some of these countries could specialize in agricultural production and others could develop certain industries complementary to those of other countries. This supranational planning requires a margin of freedom so that the underdeveloped countries can profit from the play of competition established among the developed countries.

Lack of Technical Personnel

Technical personnel cannot be obtained without investments in education. The low budgets of underdeveloped countries for this purpose are a manifestation of the lack of any standard of productivity in investments. There is a preference for investing in war material, in the army, or in a rather inefficient bureaucracy, since these investments are more in agreement with the interests of the privileged minorities who make such decisions.

With such low percentages of technical training, it is impossible to find competent executors of a really scientific development plan. The high amount of illiteracy is also a powerful influence. This fundamental defect logically influences the middle and upper levels of education. For lack of authoritative planning, the professionals of the higher level are sometimes more numerous than those of the middle level, although necessities require the very opposite. And the best skilled professionals often emigrate to developed countries where they receive higher pay.

On many occasions the help given by rich countries to those that are underdeveloped is largely in the form of technical assistance. This is very necessary, but it would also be most important to determine how to avoid the emigration of an underdeveloped country's own experts.

Lack of a Policy of Development

The lack of productive investments and of technical personnel is subject to a series of vicious circles from which it is impossible to emerge without a decision on the part of those who control the factors of power. In the underdeveloped countries, the various factors of power are generally concentrated in very few hands. The means of production and the high cultural levels belong to a minority ruling class. This same class exercises political power by itself or through a body of politicians. In some countries, in which there is a greater division of labour, the ruling class does not even assume the bother of exercising public functions. They are content to use their power to direct the public functionaries. The army is not justified in such countries except to maintain internal order, that is, the dominant structure. When we hear talk of frequent revolutions or coups d'état in Latin America, for instance, it is not a question of real revolution, because the structures are preserved intact. All that happens

is a simple change of personnel in public offices. When this change cannot be carried out by the ruling class through legal means, illegal procedures are chosen instead. Through economic, cultural, political, and military power, the ruling class controls all other power. In countries where church and state are united, the church is an instrument of the ruling élite. Moreover, when the church possesses great economic power and controls the educational system, the church is sharing the power of the ruling minority.

We shall now try to determine what factors influence the economic decisions of the ruling minorities in the underdeveloped countries and whether it is possible for measures to be taken to break the vicious circles. As an example, we shall consider the decisions taken about investments, since on these the two first obstacles are dependent, that is, the lack of productive investments and technical personnel.

Decisions to make investments that would benefit the majorities can only be adopted with difficulty by the minorities unless they also can benefit by these same decisions. No doubt, altruistic attitudes can be found in some members of the minority group. But it is difficult for individual motivation to produce group attitudes as such. We shall examine one decision that could be made by the minority class which would be beneficial to everyone. This would be a general raising of the standard of living.

In principle, the increase of purchasing power augments demand, and this growing demand will result in the increase of production. If this mechanism is to function, certain conditions are necessary: (1) the existence of a national market economy; (2) free competition – the absence of monopolies, cartels, and tariff protectionism; and (3) a mentality of enterprise among producers.

We should try to explain these conditions. An important sector of the members of the ruling class in the under-

developed countries do not derive their incomes from a national market economy. Absentee landlords, many ranch owners, and those who invest abroad are not affected by the immediate fluctuations of the demand for goods and services within the internal market.

The concentration of economic power in few hands is correlative to the monopolistic structure. In the underdeveloped countries, the monopolies, trusts, and cartels control production, especially industrial production. In agricultural production within a market economy, the middlemen enjoy a monopoly of distribution. The monopolistic producer does not necessarily depend on the volume of demand to maintain his level of earnings. He can establish prices over and above the marginal costs of production. The volume of production will only increase when the advantages of mass production or a large quantity of sales justify a lowering of prices.

The raising of the standard of living can only be achieved by tapping the earnings of capitalists. It is much simpler to insist on higher prices for fewer consumers than lower prices for more consumers. The latter formula implies more labour, more possibilities of labour conflicts, and a reduction of luxury goods. If the monopolies enjoy the protection of the state, the competition of foreign products is then excluded. As long as the price of foreign products remains higher, the effort made by the national producer will be centred entirely on quality. Advertising will be directed to the sector of the population which consumes foreign products, for any reason whatever. The demand which is of interest to monopolists proceeds from the higher economic strata. Producers can create an increase in the general standard of living only within a market of free competition.

If we consider the mentality of enterprise among producers, in spite of the limitations in the conditions just mentioned, it is undeniable that in underdeveloped countries there are some producers who, within a market economy, are in free

competition. However, in deciding to increase the demand for their products, the producers must have a real desire to enlarge their production. And this requires the possession of an enterprise mentality in the sense in which Schumpeter defines it: placing productivity, creativity, and audacity in the foreground. Nevertheless, the spreading of this attitude is closely dependent on general economic development. There are two factors between which reciprocal causality exists. In the underdeveloped countries a feudal mentality is the most widespread. Prestige is based more on possessing, especially of ostensible goods, than on producing or possessing the goods of production. This means that only a small minority of the producers is interested in raising the standard of living of the popular classes. This minority is commonly called a progressive or nationalistic middle class.

This example of the decisions regarding the standard of living shows us how difficult it is to persuade the ruling class to make decisions beneficial to the majorities rather than exclusively concerning their own interests. In the underdeveloped countries, the power of this class is so great that any concession is considered a damaging loss. It would be very hard for the ruling minorities to make a spontaneous effort to break through the vicious circles. That is why a development policy does not exist in the underdeveloped countries and why there cannot be real economic planning. On analysing the absence of a development policy, we saw the difficulty that prevents the ruling class from adopting technical standards to ensure the welfare of the majorities rather than their own class interests. If initiative does not proceed from the ruling class, it can be supposed that it will come from the majorities, as was explained in speaking of the developed capitalistic countries.

However, it is difficult for the majorities in underdeveloped countries to exert sufficiently effective pressures to orient the policy of economic development. It is obvious that just as

there is a difference in the degrees and stages of development, there will also be a difference in the possibilities of majority pressure to produce economic effects.

We should now consider the obstacles that must be overcome if the majorities are to exert pressure for exclusively economic effects. These obstacles generally are apparent in underdeveloped countries, but in different degrees. Among the principal obstacles, the following can be mentioned: lack of motivation, lack of information, lack of organization, and lack of freedom of action.

Lack of Motivation

Motivation is directly related to anticipated efficacy. Now, anticipated efficacy is dependent on experience and information. Efficacious experience in economic matters is the result of other obstacles that will be considered later on, and the necessary information pertains to efficacy in other similar societies. In general, the popular masses in the underdeveloped countries have very little confidence in their own ability to accomplish structural economic reforms. However, they do have some confidence, and therefore motivation, about casual or superficial reforms.

Lack of Information

'Information' is taken here in the broadest sense as the possibility to read, hear, and learn. The media of information of the popular majority classes are quite precarious. Because of the high rate of illiteracy, the auditory media have become most common, especially since the invention of transistors that do not require infrastructural functioning to produce energy. Personal contacts are also effective, although in these countries they are greatly hindered by the lack of transportation facilities.

The best media are those most suitable for transmitting or tuning in slogans that are more political than scientific. Information concerning economic matters does not occupy an important place in the news received by the popular masses in underdeveloped countries. In the news broadcasts, most of the references to economic matters, pertain to the failures and troubles of labour unions, which, in these countries, are quite frequent.

Lack of Organization

Organization presupposes planning and discipline, and these factors are really a by-product of development. The underdeveloped countries have generally been dominated by developed countries. Various forms of colonialism have favoured passivity in most of the colonial areas. Individualism, especially among the small landholding population of the countryside, appeared at the same time as the colonial institutions.

Substructural organizations are scarce in the underdeveloped countries. The native 'reservations', with their communal organization, are gradually disappearing, especially in countries in which the ruling classes are more compact.

Lack of Freedom of Action

The activity of rural groups has always been difficult because of the dispersion and individualism which, in general, characterize their constituents. The most powerful groups from the numerical, economic, and organizational standpoint belong to the great enterprises, both urban and rural. Furthermore, the lower members of these enterprises generally share the privileges of the owners and managers, although on a very inferior scale. In general, the labour unions of the great monopolistic or protected enterprises are company unions which enjoy no freedom of action.

The low economic resources of this basic population have impeded its freedom of action. The strikes of the non-company unions, when they are not declared illegal, are simply weakened through hunger. Legal or informal persecution is an instrument of the ruling classes to hinder the activity of popular organizations and especially the activity of their **leaders.**

In conclusion, we may say that in the underdeveloped countries it will not be possible to form majority groups to produce any exclusively economic changes of a structural character without the elements and factors that are implicit in the process of development itself. Such factors primarily include an effective motivation to form the groups, certain and complete information, a sense of planning and discipline, and a relative political, legal, and economic freedom to **undertake necessary changes.**

THE POSSIBILITY OF POLITICAL PRESSURE FROM THE MAJORITIES IN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES

For pressures of a political type exerted by majorities, the obstacles in underdeveloped countries are much fewer. Political propaganda is more abundant and accessible, producing motivations based upon known results. Political organizations, on the contrary, fare with greater difficulty, but sometimes they can disguise themselves as social organizations and, in this case, clandestineness favours motivation. Freedom of action is also diminished, perhaps even more so than in the attempts to exert economic pressures. However, the struggle to win, although more obvious, changes into something less **difficult.**

Political pressure, of course, cannot be isolated from economic pressure or even less from social pressure. However, political pressure is considered here in the sense of a series of actions, legal or illegal, peaceful or violent, which are under-

taken to procure governmental decisions. These governmental decisions can pertain to institutions, reforming or changing them. Consequently, pressure can be exerted either to obtain casual or superficial changes or to reform and even change the structures. This distinction is fundamental for under-developed countries.

Pressure to bring about superficial changes that are not structural has generally been the only activity of the organized majority groups. The establishment of labour legislation patterned on that of the developed countries has served as a sophism of distraction to channel the efforts of the popular class towards superficialities. Among these casual or superficial changes there are a few economic advantages that should be considered results of the economic pressures already mentioned.

Pressure to obtain reformist changes has tried to provide solutions of transaction, that is, solutions which cover interests common to both the upper and the popular classes. These solutions do not change the structures but merely adapt them to these common interests, if they exist at all. Sometimes they prepare the society for fundamental change, as do the laws of agrarian reform which serve to industrialize a country.

Pressure to obtain a revolutionary change aims at a transformation of the structures themselves. In particular, this involves a change in the structure of property, income, investments, consumption, and education and a change in political and administrative organization. It also seeks change in international relations – political, economic, and cultural.

The desire and foresight of the ruling class are modified by the type and intensity of pressure coming from the popular class. In Table 1 are listed the alternatives which this confrontation of attitudes and forces may offer.

EXPLANATION OF THE TABLE

Values

Three levels of intensity are arbitrarily mentioned: maximum, medium, and minimum.

Desire

This is not only a matter of traditional and sentimental attitude or of an attitude of isolated persons. The desire can be motivated because of economic reasons and group interests. In this outlook, the fear generated by the danger of not surviving as a class or as a group is excluded from the desire. This fear is mentioned in the section entitled 'Foresight'.

Table 1

Possible Forms of Structural Change

Ruling Class			Popular Class	Result	Example
<i>Desire</i>	<i>Foresight</i>	<i>Pressure</i>			
b*	a	a		Peaceful revolution	Chile
c	c	a		Violent revolution	Cuba
c	b	b		Reformism	Colombia
c	a	b		Rightist coup d'etat	Brazil
c	a	c		Repression	Venezuela
b	b	b		Status quo	Uruguay
a	a	a		Ideal peaceful revolution	?

* Values: a = maximum, b = medium, c = minimum.

The desire was previously analysed when we considered the common interests that can lead the ruling class to make decisions about productive investments. Although there is a risk of generalizing arbitrarily, it can be stated that the degree of desire of the ruling class depends upon the number, the economic independence, the nationalism, and the enterpris-

ing mentality of its members. A progressive middle class can even desire a change of structures. However, this progressivism of the middle class is also a by-product of general development.

Foresight

This is a wholly intellectual and rational position. An event can be foreseen even though it is not desired. The attitude concerning structural changes can vary fundamentally if it is foreseen. Many decisions can be taken by the ruling class according to the famous principle of sacrificing something in order not to lose everything. The foresight of the ruling class depends on two factors: the capacity for analysis and information. The capacity for analysis pertains to the qualifications and intelligence of their leaders. Information depends on the channels of communication. If one of these two factors is deficient, the foresight will also be deficient. That is why differences can be noted between the foresight of the ruling class and the real pressure of the popular class.

Unfortunately, in the underdeveloped countries deficiencies are possible in both factors. The average professional qualifications of the leaders can be quite low, especially in colonized countries in which the colonizing powers have impeded the higher education of the native cadres. In any case, it is very probable that the low qualifications of the leaders are attributable to the low general educational level which is characteristic of the underdeveloped countries. And this situation is aggravated when the most qualified leave to find work in the developed countries.

The problem of information in the underdeveloped countries which were colonies at some time or other is the co-existence of two cultures. Maurice Duverger classifies these two cultures in terms of 'modern population' and 'archaic population'. Generally, the ruling minority is identified with

the 'modern population' and the popular majority with the 'archaic population'.³ It is this cultural division which is the principal obstacle to information. The means of communication are constantly becoming more available to the popular class. But this communication increases the expectations of this class in a way that is disproportionately greater than the economic and social progress achieved. The institutions of communication are controlled by the ruling class, for instance, the press, radio, and television. The popular class has very few means of communication. This circumstance can produce information that is relatively useful about the attitudes of the ruling class, but it can also prevent this ruling class from knowing what is actually happening among the majority groups. On many occasions, because of cultural differences, it is possible to use the same vocabulary with completely different meanings. And then, of course, the terminology will divide far more than it unites. And this can mean that a powerful fundamental pressure exists which is not foreseen by the ruling class.

Pressure

We have already explained the different kinds of pressure which the popular class can exert. In this outline, no attempt is made to indicate which of the three is exercised. However, the degree of intensity (a, b, c) refers to the efficacy with which structural change, properly called, is sought.

Result

This can be doubtful, but the results that are listed can be considered as quite probable.

3. Maurice Duverger, *La Influencia de las Fuerzas Políticas en la Administración Pública en los Países en Proceso de Desarrollo*, Bogotá, 1963, p. 18.

Examples

These are taken from Latin-American cases that are best known to the author. They may not be wholly exact, but they are enlightening.

Deductions

The study of the chart indicates the following conclusions. (1) In underdeveloped countries structural changes will not be produced without pressure from the popular class. (2) Peaceful revolution is directly determined by the foresight of the ruling class, although the desire on the part of this class is difficult to arouse. (3) Violent revolution is a quite probable alternative, because the ruling classes lack foresight.

Economic planning that is technically oriented to benefit the majorities is very difficult to obtain if there is no structural reform which permits these majorities to exert pressure on political decisions. If the planning is not done by the state, compelling the orientation of investments, it is impossible to bring about any efficiency favourable to the majorities. That is why the problem for Christianity is stated in terms of efficacious charity, that is, in terms of that which constitutes the first priority in the apostolate of the modern world and of the underdeveloped countries.

Christian Responsibility in Economic Planning

THE PROBLEM

It has been shown that the modern apostolate, especially in underdeveloped countries, must have as its principal objective the attainment of charity that is really efficacious among all men, without distinction of creeds, attitudes, or cultures.

Furthermore, it seems practically impossible for majorities in the underdeveloped countries to attain a really human socio-economic level unless there is economic planning to change the structures. These structures will not change without pressure from the majorities, and this pressure will be peaceful or violent depending upon the attitude of the minority ruling class.

Christians must adopt toward this process an attitude that will not betray the practice of charity. Their reaction must not be opportunistic or expedient when they consider the needs and demands of the world. However, a Christian must not withdraw from the world but rather protect himself from evil (John xvii, 15). He must sanctify the world in truth (John xvii, 19). Like Christ, he must become incarnate in humanity, in its history and culture. Accordingly, he must forever seek the application of his life of supernatural love in the economic and social structures in which he should always be active.

HISTORICAL POSSIBILITIES OF ECONOMIC PLANNING THAT WILL BE BENEFICIAL TO THE MAJORITIES

Planning Directed by Christians

When mention is made of a temporal undertaking carried out by Christians, every kind of integralism should be discarded, because this pertains to the activity of Christians as persons, as citizens of the world, not as members of an institution and religious society. For this reason, it is not necessary to determine whether this activity can be confirmed and carried out by a political party that calls itself Christian or by any organization in which Christians participate. Instead, we must try to define the possibilities, and the advantages and disadvantages, if Christians assume leadership of technical planning that will benefit majorities in indigent countries.

Regardless of the advances achieved in recent times, we must admit that Christians have been far behind in the field of social accomplishments. Moreover, it has been only in recent times that technical and scientific orientation has been a part of the Christian heritage. Whether because of their compromises or their scientific qualifications, especially in underdeveloped countries, Christians do not generally deserve or cannot properly assume leadership in economic planning or structural reform. This situation could change in the event that other ideological currents were halted in their activity or in their technical progress, and if Christians continued in their advance. However, this does not seem very likely.

If Christians assumed leadership in the matter of change and in planning, it is possible that the ultimate ends might be quite compatible with a more integral humanism and that the chosen means would be less traumatic, especially in relation to certain spiritual values.

However, in view of the historical circumstances in which Christians find themselves, it is possible that they will fail because of lack of technology and because of the monolithic dogmatism. This monolithic aspect, in the sense of excluding pluralism in their activity, deprives them of the assistance of many leaders of great scientific qualification. This exclusion cannot be permitted in countries in which there is precisely a lack of technical experts.

Planning Directed by Marxists

By Marxists we mean specifically those who adhere to historical and dialectical materialism. Among these are the orthodox communists, whom we will investigate separately. First we shall consider Marxists who do not obey the discipline of the official Communist party.

In the modern world, Marxists began the movement advo-

cating structural change. They have technical experts in economics and in the physical and biological sciences. But dogmatism in the social sciences has been partially harmful to the orthodox Marxists who are the most emphatically dogmatic. We say 'partially' because orthodox socio-economic analyses are in harmony with the socio-economic structures of the indigent countries. As a matter of fact, if we compare Marxist analyses strictly pertaining to the socio-economic structures of these countries with capitalist analyses, we will find that the Marxist analyses are better adapted to reality and especially to the expectations of the indigent majorities.

In economic planning Marxists have held the first place, but it is important to recognize the difference between the purely economic, administrative, and technical mechanism of economic planning, which authoritatively regulates investments, and the philosophy which inspired this regulation. In our time, this same regulation is inspired and practised under other economic philosophies, as, for example, in Israel. This proves that it is not necessarily connected with Marxist ideology.

Among the advantages of Marxist planning we should note its orientation, which is specifically popular, and the value of its analyses of underdeveloped or developing societies. We should also keep in mind its tradition in the struggle for structural change and technical planning. However, the orthodox Marxists run the risk of being dogmatic in socio-economic matters which are most complex, variable, and contingent. Likewise, the party members follow prefabricated tactics schemes which in many cases, as in Cuba, oblige them to diverge from the revolutionary struggles that are not in keeping with these schemes.

Heterodox Marxists can run the risk of pursuing truncated and diminished ends because they are confined within materialistic conceptions. As for the means employed, it is

probable that many of them restrain and curb certain human rights.

Planning Directed by Uncommitted Persons

The revolutionary struggle cannot be carried out unless there is a complete and integrated *Weltanschauung*. That it is why it is difficult in the contemporary Western world for this struggle to be undertaken apart from Christian and Marxist ideologies which, for all practical purposes, are the only ideologies that possess an integral *Weltanschauung*. And for this reason it is difficult for uncommitted persons who do not belong to one of these ideological camps to assume revolutionary leadership. However, these persons can contribute usefully in so far as they are really committed and in so far as they are technical experts.

Uncommitted persons have the advantage of stripping dogmatism from political struggles whenever these persons have real influence and are working in good faith. Yet, because of the two ideological extremes, an uncommitted person can be at a disadvantage; those who are not working by virtue of a total conception of the problem become 'useful idiots' in one or the other of these sectors and work without any mystique.

THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT STRUCTURAL CHANGES AND ECONOMIC PLANNING FAVOURABLE TO THE MAJORITIES

After what has been said, it remains quite clear that in poor countries the Christian not only can but must commit himself to the process of structural change in order to undertake successfully technical planning that is favourable to the majorities. In fact, for a Christian the greatest hesitation to

adopt such an attitude would probably arise if the active pursuit of these objectives were directed by Marxists. In such a case, the Christian would have three alternatives: rejection of this action, abstention, and collaboration. The choice to reject or abstain from activity which in itself would be beneficial to the majority should be seriously reflected upon by every Christian. To make such a decision, it would be necessary to show that the means employed are intrinsically evil or that there are inevitable ends which are also evil.

In economic planning, the end principally sought is the control of earnings and investments. The means would be the intervention of the state in so far as this was necessary in the means of production. It is possible that this intervention would move towards nationalization of some or all of the means of production. This end and these means are not inherently evil. Furthermore, if using these means and seeking this end is the best way to ensure the common good in a particular society in a particular historical era, collaboration in this effort becomes morally obligatory.

Finally, there is the problem of the other ends sought by Marxists and the other means which they use. Collaboration with Marxists implies a moral problem and a problem of tactics; these are closely connected. It is a moral problem if there are evil ends consequential to the essential end or if, in fact, evil means are utilized. If this is the case, rejection or abstention are still not necessary so long as nothing is known concerning the kind of evil that is avoided and the kind of causality the evil ends possess in relation to good ends. Is the causality efficient, total, or essential? In the historical reality of the underdeveloped countries, these circumstances are difficult to observe or prove. Revolution is such a complex undertaking that it would be deceitful to classify it within a system of causality and finality that is wholly evil. The means can be diverse, and in the course of action it is easy to introduce modifications.

When we regard the problem of tactics, we must ask whether, in a process which in itself is just, Christians, in deliberate and technical collaboration, could not simply disregard evil means and ends. If the Marxist problem is closely analysed, I believe that an affirmative answer is possible. Dialectical and historical materialism in the mental process of Marxists appears to be so useful for revolutionary methods that it can be considered quite objective. Moreover, the materialistic focus gives Marxists a tendency towards the positive.

If the application of economic and social principles turns out well, it is probable that the insistence on philosophical speculation will fade out. As a matter of fact, this has already happened in certain places, as for instance in Poland. What is more, the most recent statements of Tolgliatti concerning anti-religious tactics show how Marxism must evolve in its theory, if in practice it has shown that religion is not 'the opium of the people'.

To undertake the collaboration that has been suggested, certain norms must be taken into account so as not to run the risk of serving as 'useful idiots'. It is therefore important that collaboration is established at the level of action where the scope and the doctrinal implications can be limited. We must be well-informed about the most efficacious ends and means in accordance with the technique and the circumstances, and we must also know the ends and means which correspond to the Marxist theory.

With firm decision and without timidity, we should enter into this collaboration, since the greatest authority accepted by the society that needs structural change is the authority of revolutionary commitment, which for the Christian should be a commitment in charity. This authority will permit us to demand concessions in the event that Marxists have some share of power.

Conclusions

To seek authoritative economic planning in the indigent countries is generally an obligation for the Christian. This planning is essential to efficacy in the authentic service of the majorities, and, therefore, it is a condition of charity in these countries.

It is most probable that the Marxists will take over the leadership of this planning. In this case, the Christian must collaborate as far as his moral principles will permit, keeping in mind the obligation of avoiding greater evils and of seeking the common good. Under such conditions, it is possible that in the underdeveloped countries there will be no recurrence of the struggles among groups seeking structural reforms favourable to the majorities. Without factionalism, and without conquerors or conquered, Christians will be able to participate in the building of a better world that will continually draw closer to its ideal of universal love.

17. Criticism and Self-Criticism*

We shall have to convince ourselves that mankind is not seeking conflict. In fact, it is trying to avoid it as far as possible. Conflict is the result of a very complex series of factors, among which the desire to cause it is perhaps the least influential. Those who are interested in studying the causes of human behaviour must regard conflict as an object

* [MS submitted to *El Espectador*, Bogotá, at the beginning of December 1964, shortly after Carlos Lleras, Colombia's future President (1966-70), was heckled and bombarded with eggs when he appeared at the National University. - Ed.]

of study more than a manifestation of morality or immorality.

Dr Carlos Lleras is intelligent, educated, and, to say the least, highly civilized. That is why he seeks to enter into dialogue even with his greatest adversaries. He knows that dialogue is constructive, and for that reason he came to the university. The students like to hear him talk and they also like to ask him questions; in a word, they like the dialogue. And dialogue is one of the principal activities of a student. We can say for sure that the university student does not like to smell tear gas, to throw eggs at his fellow men, or to spend his spare time exposing his personal safety to the fury of bayonets. And yet conflict occurred, and this was a conflict which, in itself, neither of the two parties sought or wanted. To explain this fact, we must try to see what currents were clashing and what they represented in themselves.

Quite apart from what they are in reality, the concept which one social group holds about the other is a stereotype, that is, a simplified figure of those external traits which make the greatest impressions. Carlos Lleras may possess both subjective and objective qualities. Nevertheless, like any man in politics, he represents a system, and, like most politicians characteristic of the system, he personifies a class which, in this case, is the privileged and governing minority. Theoretically, university students should study, do research, attend class – nothing more. In an underdeveloped country, students combine in themselves two qualities which are rarely found conjoined in other groups of society: a relatively high cultural level and a certain freedom from the dominant structures and the ruling minority. This explains the political role which the university has played in underdeveloped countries, especially in Latin America. We are not concerned about anathematizing or praising the political intervention of university students. We must simply accept this intervention as a fact and explain the causes.

The two characteristics previously noted produce an attitude of defiance and nonconformity in a society whose structures require a fundamental change. In the more advanced democracies, defiance and nonconformity have their own channels of expression. Information is not a monopoly, as in the underdeveloped countries, even when there is an apparent freedom of opinion, expression, and press in some underdeveloped countries. The minority pressure groups have found methods that are less obvious and more efficacious than censorship and direct persecution. The blockading of propaganda, of job opportunities, and of financial support produces not only a limitation on all manifestations of opposition but even its total disappearance.

When the institutional channels of expression are obstructed and nonconformity cannot be expressed, even if its intensity is increasing, this need for expression will follow riverbeds that are not foreseen among the structures in force. These channels are disparagingly called antisocial or pathological. At the moment, when the possibility of using anti-social channels of expression of nonconformity coincides with the presence of the latter's object, a conflict is produced which is necessarily qualified as antisocial by the group that controls the institutional channels. The attitude of this ruling group is of course explainable. Unfortunately, it implies an absolute lack of self-criticism.

The errors of the ruling class are not sufficient in themselves to produce a conflict. But the lack of self-criticism holds in error whoever falls into conflict. Regrettably, this has been one of the characteristics of the dominant class in recent years. The phenomenon of violence arises, and, before it is carefully examined, it is dealt with by the only known method – repression. When, after thirteen years of enduring this situation, someone dares to make a study of violence and publish it as an article, he does not produce any kind of serious thought, but instead the article becomes

the instrument of one partisan group or a source of insult to another group. When the majority refuse to vote in certain elections, this refusal is attributed to everything except the errors of the ruling class; and when social facts are revealed that are interpreted to the detriment of this class, it reacts immediately with defence and attack. This same article will produce neither reflection nor self-criticism. It will only be an object of condemnation for the ruling class whose members will remain enclosed in its ivory tower, mutually praising one another. No censor will consider himself sufficiently authorized to contradict them. The chasm between this class and the popular majorities is continually deepened, and the systems of communication between the two become more precarious every day.

The reforms that could prevent violent revolution will not be initiated by the dominant class if that class does not foresee greater evils in the future. The capacity of foresight is directly related to analytical ability and to the accuracy of information concerning the probability of these greater evils. Our ruling class simply lacks the ability to make an objective analysis. Sentiment and tradition generally govern all their reactions. The information media function from top to bottom, from the ruling class to the popular class, but they do not function inversely because of a lack of any means of expression and because of the differences in terminology.

These circumstances lead to paradoxical situations. The ruling group cannot understand why the university students, who are the most select among Colombian students, will not accept a rational dialogue. The university students do not understand why they meet with approval when they shout and throw rocks at Rojas Pinilla while they are censured when they hurl eggs at Carlos Lleras. The ruling group simply cannot understand why the university students should mix into politics, but the students cannot understand

why apolitical directors of the university should allow a political conference within its confines. The students fail to understand why the university's extraterritoriality was defended when the servants of the dictatorship were killing students within the White City and or why the university now leans on the army to repress those who were considered the 'traditional defenders of democracy'. The double standard which the ruling class wishes to impose on the country is based upon their ignorance of the capacity for criticism which the popular class and the university students acquired as soon as they were able to express it. Only brave and sincere self-criticism by the ruling class will make it possible to establish contact between the two classes. Whether this contact is re-established or is completely extinguished will determine whether the next social conflicts in Colombia will culminate in agreement or violence.

18. Platform for a United Popular Movement*

To all Colombians; to the popular class; to the middle class; to the organizations for communal action; to the unions, co-operatives, brotherhoods, peasant leagues, and workers' organizations; to the Indians; to all who are dissatisfied, men and women; to the youth; to all those who are not tied to the traditional political parties; to the new parties – to all of you we submit the following platform in order to unite with concrete objectives the Colombian popular class.

* [Written towards the end of February 1965 and passed around to various rebel groups but never made public except as changed (see Chapter 20). – Ed.]

MOTIVES

1. At present the decisions that are necessary for Colombian politics to be at the service of the majority and not the minority are made by those who hold power.

2. Those who actually hold power now constitute an economic minority whose fundamental decisions are responsible for national politics.

3. This minority will never make decisions counter to its own interests.

4. The decisions needed so that the socio-economic and political development of the country benefits the majority obviously run counter to the interests of the economic minority.

5. This condition makes indispensable a change in the structure of political power so that the organized majority can control the decision-making process.

6. There does not exist in Colombia a social force capable of establishing a new political power which is so urgently needed.

7. Actually, the majority does reject the traditional political parties and the existing system but does not have a political apparatus capable of seizing power.

8. The political apparatus which must be organized must have a pluralistic character to benefit most from the support of the new parties, of the discontented within the traditional parties, of the non-political organizations, and, in general, of the masses; it must be based on technical planning and must be constituted along principles of action rather than around a leader to avoid the danger of cliques, demagoguery, and the cult of an individual.

OBJECTIVES

Agrarian Reform

The land must belong to those who work it directly. The government will designate agrarian inspectors who will deliver the land titles to those peasants who fulfil this condition, but it will be able to demand that the land is developed under cooperative and communal systems, in accord with a national agrarian plan, with credits and technical assistance.

No land will be bought. That which is considered necessary for the common good will be expropriated without compensation. Subsistence farming will be abolished gradually, to be replaced by commercial agriculture.

Urban Reform

Urban reform will take into account the methods and effects of agrarian reform and will be coordinated with the plans of the Institute of Land Credit, the Central Mortgage Bank, the architectural societies, the Colombian Chamber of Construction, and other groups, as well as with all the entities and firms dealing in public services.

All the inhabitants of houses in the cities and towns will become owners of their dwelling places. Persons whose sole means of support is the rent derived from ownership of one house will be able to keep it as long as that fact can be proved.

The owner of any room which, in the judgement of the urban reform committee, is not sufficiently used will be fined, and the money will be invested by the state into its housing programme.

Empty lots in urban and suburban areas will be expropriated for the housing programme.

Business Reform

Free enterprise will be abolished and replaced by a system of cooperative and communitarian enterprises. As a first step, all voting in companies will be according to a person's relationship to the company and not according to capital represented by stock ownership. All workers will be stockholders and will participate as equals in the opportunities available. Through the unions, they will share in policy decisions and in administrative decisions of the companies. This participation can be direct or indirect, depending on the judgement of the unions themselves.

Pluralism and the free choice of workers will be encouraged within the union system, and the freedom of the labour organizations will be respected according to the International Labor Organization agreements.

Cooperativism

The cooperative system will be encouraged in all forms: credit and saving, marketing, production, construction, and purchasing. Within the democratic planning established by popular institutions and the state, cooperativism will be free.

Communal Action

Both in rural and urban sectors, communal action as the basis for democratic planning will be fostered. Through this action, municipal life will be meaningful again, and the municipalities, with their authorities freely elected by their neighbours, will become the living cells of the nation.

Planning

A compulsory plan aimed at substituting imports and at diversifying and increasing exports will be put into action.

Within the shortest time span it is to be hoped that only the kind of capital goods which contribute to national development will be imported.

Tax Policy

All salaries of 1-5,000 pesos monthly shall be taxed on a progressive scale. Above this limit, the excess income which is not invested in the sectors stipulated in the official plan will pass in their entirety to the state. No institution will be exempt from paying taxes. Salaries, up to the 5,000 pesos limit, will not be taxed if they consist of family income; if not, they will be subject to existing regulations.

Monetary Policy

No new money will be issued unless to increase those sectors of production which make possible short- or long-term transactions. Money in circulation will be reduced to the value of the real transactions. The Colombian nation will stay on the gold standard for international transactions.

Nationalizations

Banks, hospitals, clinics, laboratories, pharmacies, and firms exploiting natural resources will belong to the state.

Public transportation will be operated by cooperative and communitarian enterprises or, if not, will pass to the state.

The press, radio, television, and movies will be free but will be regulated by the state for the common good.

The state will provide free education to all Colombians, respecting the ideology of the parents until the end of secondary schooling and the ideology of the student after secondary schooling. Education will be compulsory until the end of secondary schooling or technical training. There will be legal punishment of parents who do not comply with the

obligation to educate their children. Financing of education will be covered by government investment programmes through increased taxation.

Oil will be exploited by the state so long as it can afford it. Concessions to foreign oil companies will not be made except under the following conditions: (1) that refineries are simultaneously set up in Colombia; (2) that 80 per cent of the industry remains in the hands of the state; (3) that the whole industry revert back to the state within ten years; (4) that the salaries of Colombian employees and workers are at least equal to those of the foreigners doing the same work.

International Relations

Colombia will have diplomatic and commercial relations with every country in the world.

Public Health

All people in professions dealing with matters of health will be state employees.

To begin with, each professional will be assigned a certain number of families, according to the population and number of professionals.

The state will offer social assistance to all Colombians.

Family Policy

Parents who abandon their children will be prosecuted. The law will protect wives and children with effective sanctions.

Social Crimes

In addition to the crimes already covered by our penal code and also by the above policy on abandoning the home, the following will be considered social crimes: usury; hoarding; speculation; flight of capital; contraband; defamation by the

press, the radio, the television, or the cinema; disorientation of public opinion through false, incomplete, or tendentious information.

The Armed Forces

The budget for repression will be reduced to the minimum. All Colombians, both men and women, will have an obligation to serve the state in some civil capacity for two years after their eighteenth birthday. Military service will be changed into civil service.

IMMEDIATE ACTION

The final objective is the creation of a pluralistic political force capable of seizing power.

1. It is necessary to organize a movement from the bottom up which will guarantee individual and group adherence to this platform.
2. This platform must be distributed and explained by the militants of the movement who are in accord with it during the months of March, April, and May, 1965, in order to obtain such individual and social adherence.
3. Those who support this platform will be grouped around the name of the United Front of Popular Movements, which will reflect their unity of action both in the ideology and the specific programmes of each group and party.
4. In each municipality, or, if possible, in each *vereda* and neighbourhood, action committees of those who adhere to this platform will be set up and their leader and second elected.
5. On 31 May 1965 departmental and district meetings of all these leaders will be held in the capital of each department or region. In these meetings the delegates to a Bogotá convention will be elected.
6. These delegates will meet in Bogotá on 20 July 1965,

with the tasks of deciding the next objectives of the United Front and its policy regarding Presidential elections.

7. A political bureau will also be elected at this assembly, to represent all the movements of the country to coordinate the campaigns of the United Front.

8. All projects launched must count on the initiative and effort of the people organized into communal action : peasant leagues, unions, student and professional organizations, and political parties.

19. Letter to Bishop Rubén Isaza*

Your Excellency :

In addressing you in the traditional form, I am in no way implying anything contrary to the fraternal spirit that inspired this letter to an elder brother, whom God, in His providence, has placed over me as His representative.

When your Excellency proposed that I should resign from my present work to take charge of the research on the necessary background material for the pastoral letter in our archdiocese, I asked you to grant me a time extension to accede to the request. The arguments I voiced were prompted by charitable feelings for many persons who depend on my work and whose positions would be insecure were I to resign immediately. These arguments, I believe, were valid and Your Excellency agreed.

Without questioning the validity of your proposal, I have reflected on the innermost reaction that it produced in me. I felt a profound repugnance at the thought of working within the ecclesiastical structure of our church. I have made use of my hours of meditation to study more deeply this

* [Letter dated 19 April 1965. - Ed.]

reaction which, in a priest, seems at least unbefitting if not absurd.

My work as priest has developed over the course of more than ten years under the authority of my bishop but slightly outside the ecclesiastical structure. This situation may have been disadvantageous for my priestly spirit but it may at the same time be advantageous for the life of the church. One of these advantages may be that I have acquired a more objective vision of the church, in which I believe but in which I have been less active than others whose capacities for analysis might be greater than mine but who are more involved in a phenomenon I am going to try to describe.

When I considered the possibility of working in the curia, doing research, I felt certain that I was being separated from the world and from the poor to become part of a closed group of an organization which belongs to the powerful of this world. When I considered how I should direct the research, I was faced with theoretical problems for which I believe I will find solutions different from – or opposed to – those of the hierarchy when they utilize the results of my research.

The solution to these problems, I believe, is vital for the success of the research inasmuch as it will determine the orientation of the research. Since to study everything would be impossible, it is necessary that the results correspond to an outline agreed upon between the investigator and those who have the responsibility of writing the pastoral letter of the archdiocese.

About my own outline I want to write your Excellency so that you may judge whether I am the appropriate person to do the proposed research.

As pastoral programme I understand the combination of activities which should be undertaken to build or extend the Kingdom of God in a particular period of history and in a particular society. To be able to reach an agreement on the essence of the pastoral programme, it is necessary to agree on

what is the Kingdom of God. To be able to orient research, it is necessary to agree on a series of hypotheses on Colombian society in the present era.

The Kingdom of God is spiritual life, the justification of humanity. To extend the Kingdom of God or to establish it is a problem of spiritual life. The labours that build the Kingdom are those which lead more surely and directly to spiritual life.

Within these there are priorities. In my opinion, to establish the Kingdom, our work should receive emphasis in the following order, keeping in mind that these activities do not exclude but rather complement each other: we should lead people to love, with that love manifest in surrender of self; we should preach the Gospel; we should celebrate external rites – Eucharist and sacraments (sacramental-paraliturgical).

Colombian society is, in its majority, a Catholic society in the sense that it complies with external rites (baptism, confession, Communion, marriage, burial Mass, extreme unction, processions, novenae, scapulars, first Fridays). Within Colombian society there are many who love their fellow man, with the love manifest in self-surrender, although they deny that they are Catholics or, at least, deny they belong to the church – the church being understood as the ecclesiastical structure.

If the pastoral programme is concentrated on maintaining the above stated situation, it may not be possible to build or extend the Kingdom of God. If the priority of love above all is accepted, if preaching is preferred over the celebration of rites, the hierarchy will have to undertake a missionary pastoral programme.

Pastoral mission requires that quality rather than quantity of Catholics be emphasized. More insistence must be placed on personal conviction than on the usual pressures of family and society. The exclusive teaching of Catholicism in the schools must be abandoned, and pluralism must be accepted.

Freedom of speech must be permitted in the classroom. Both children and adults must be led in Bible study.

Emphasis must be placed more on the love that is surrender of self than on professed faith and religious observances. Preaching of the Gospel must be stressed above the celebration of rites.

Steps must be taken to eliminate social and psychological factors which stand in the way of a conscientious and personal involvement in the church on the part of those who want to love and surrender themselves to others. Within these factors are the economic power of the church and the political power of the church. This power resides formally in the laws and in the Concordat. It lies informally in clericalism (intromission, the desire to dominate in the temporal plane).

Other such obstacles are created by the cultural sociological and psychological barriers existing between the clergy and the congregation by lack of solidarity with the poor, and by the lack of scientific attitude in the church.

If the purpose of the pastoral programme is to maintain the status quo, it will be very difficult for me to collaborate effectively, since I would be doing so out of obedience but against all my rational convictions. Therefore, I believe that elemental honesty obliges me to declare these viewpoints to **your Excellency**.

To this letter I attach a study I have taken the liberty of making on the priorities of Christian love.

I believe that either I can defend my fore-stated opinions by sound theology or that they constitute a working hypothesis which can be proven by empirical research. Nevertheless, I would be willing to retract them at the very moment that I were to be convinced of my error, if my error were one that goes against dogma or good customs.

Fraternally with your Excellency . . .

20. Platform of the United Front of the Colombian People*

To all Colombians; to the popular sectors of our society; to the organizations of communal action; to the unions, co-operatives, fraternal organizations, peasant leagues, Indian communities, and workers' organizations; to all those who are dissatisfied; to all those not registered in traditional political parties – to all of you we present the following platform to unite the Colombian people in the pursuit of concrete objectives.

MOTIVES

1. The decisions that are indispensable for Colombian politics to be oriented for the benefit of the majorities, not the minorities, must be made by those who hold power.

* [Published in *Frente Unido* (Bogotá), 26 August 1965, but made public by Torres on 22 May 1965, the day on which the United Front honoured him with a special tribute at La Ciudad Universitaria, Bogotá. Torres then declared that as a Colombian, a sociologist, a Christian, and a priest, he was a revolutionary. He considered himself a revolutionary Colombian because he could not be alien to the struggles of the people. He considered himself a revolutionary sociologist because, thanks to his scientific understanding of the conditions in Colombia, he had become convinced that technical and effective solutions could not be reached without revolution. He considered himself a revolutionary Christian because the essence of Christianity, for him, was the love of one's fellow men; only through revolution could the good of the majority in Colombia be achieved, as he saw it. Finally, he considered himself a revolutionary priest because he saw the devotion to fellow men, demanded by the revolution, as the requisite of brotherly love indispensable to the fulfilment of the mission to which he was ordained. – Ed.]

2. Those now in power constitute an economic minority which makes all the fundamental decisions of national policy.

3. This minority will never be able to make a decision adversely affecting its own interests or the foreign interests to which it is bound.

4. The decisions required for the socio-economic development of the country beneficial to the majorities and to national independence necessarily affect the interests of the economic minority.

5. These circumstances make it indispensable that the political power structure is changed so that the majorities can make the decisions.

6. At present the majorities reject the political parties and reject the present system but do not have a political apparatus suitable to take over the government.

7. The political apparatus to be organized should seek the greatest possible support of the masses, should have a technical orientation towards technology, and should be organized around principles of action rather than around a leader to avoid the danger of cliques, demagoguery, and personality cult.

OBJECTIVES

Agrarian Reform

The land will belong to the one who directly farms it. The government will designate agrarian inspectors to deliver land deeds to those peasants who are eligible to receive them but will require that the development of the land is carried out by the cooperative and community systems, in accordance with a national agrarian plan which will grant loans and give technical assistance.

No land will be purchased. What is considered necessary

for the common good of the people will be expropriated without compensation.

The Indian councils will take actual possession of the lands that belong to them. The development and strengthening of the Indian communities will be promoted.

Urban Reform

All the inhabitants of houses in the cities and towns will become owners of the houses in which they live. The person who can prove that his sole support is derived from one house will be able to keep it even if he does not live in it.

For every house not in sufficient use, in the judgement of the government, the owner will be fined, and the fines will be invested by the state in housing projects.

Planning

A compulsory plan will be drawn up to replace imported products with substitutes, to increase exports, and to industrialize the country. Every public or private investment will have to follow the national plan of investments. The transactions in foreign money will be made exclusively by the state.

Tax Reform

A progressive tax will be collected from those who receive income higher than that required by an average Colombian family to live decently – for example, 5,000 pesos monthly income in 1965. Above this limit, the excess income which is not invested in the sectors stipulated in the official investment plan will pass in their entirety to the state. No institution will be exempt from paying tax. Salaries, up to a certain limit – for example, 5,000 pesos monthly in 1965 – will not be taxed.

Nationalization

Banks, insurance companies, hospitals, clinics, manufacturing centres, pharmaceutical distribution, public transportation, radio and television, and firms exploiting natural resources will all belong to the state.

The state will provide free education to all Colombians, respecting the ideology of the parents until the end of secondary schooling and the ideology of the student after secondary schooling.

Education will be compulsory until the end of secondary schooling or technical training. There will be legal punishment of parents who do not comply with the obligation to educate their children. Financing of education will be covered by governmental investment programmes through increased taxation.

The resources of the subsoil will belong to the state and the exploitation of oil will be done by the state in the interest of the national economy. No oil concessions will be granted to foreign companies except under the following conditions : (1) that the state owns no less than 70 per cent of the stock; (2) that refining, distribution, and production of fuel are public services under state control; (3) that the companies, their equipment, installations, and plants are returned to the state, without compensation, after no more than twenty-five years; (4) that the salaries of the Colombian labourers, both manual labourers and other employees, are at least equal to those of the foreigners in the same job categories.

International Relations

Colombia will maintain relations with all the countries of the world and will engage in commercial and cultural exchange in conditions of equity and mutual benefit.

Social Security and Public Health

The state will put into effect an integral and progressive programme of social security to guarantee to the population the right to health and medical care – without jeopardy to the private practice of medicine – and will study all the aspects related to unemployment, illness, disability, old age, and death. All the personnel of the health professions will be functionaries of the government and, up to a limit fixed by law, will be paid according to the size of the families who request to be under their care.

Family Policy

Parents who abandon their children will be punished. The protection of women and children will be guaranteed by law, and punishment will be meted out to those who violate the law.

Armed Forces

The budget of the armed forces will be adequate to maintain them without excessive siphoning off of the funds necessary for health and education of Colombians. The defence of national sovereignty will be the responsibility of all the citizens of Colombia. Women will be obliged to undertake a term of civil service after they reach eighteen years of age.

Rights of Women

On a basis of equality with men, women will take part in the economic, political, and social activities of the country.

21. Communism in the Church*

Q. *What is your opinion of President Valencia's revelations of Communist infiltration in the church?*

A. From the strictly theoretical point of view, when one speaks of the church, one speaks of all the baptized, both those baptized by sacrament and those consecrated by their intention. This includes a great part of humanity inasmuch as it may be assumed that men of good faith are baptized by intention. In this sense, I do not believe that it is possible to speak of Communist infiltration in the church since in Colombia I believe that a high percentage of the Communists are baptized.

If one speaks of infiltration, it is most logical to suppose that there are members of the church who say they are Catholic but really are Communists. The only way to learn this – to detect the Communists infiltrated within the church – would be to establish a court like the old court of the Inquisition.

Nevertheless, ordinarily when one speaks of the Colombian church, one speaks of bishops and priests, and when one says that Communists have infiltrated the church, the public understands that this is a matter of infiltration in the clergy. To clarify such a situation would require an inquisition to establish within the church the crime of holding certain beliefs.

President Valencia may not have had this in mind when he made his declaration; but if it is taken seriously, the results cannot be anything other than what I have just said.

Q. *According to your criteria, to what is due the press's frequent reports on the existence of Communist priests?*

* [Interview, printed in *La Hora*, Bogotá, 27-28 May 1965. – Ed.]

A. To be able to understand what motivates a certain newspaper to publish a story about the existence of Communist priests, we would have to analyse the phenomenon of *Macartismo*¹ in general.

Every ruling class has systems of defence, some informal, and others formal. When the unpopular ruling class is in the minority, it finds it necessary to look for efficient tactics to disqualify its adversaries in the eyes of the public. Public opinion is more easily oriented by adjectives than by philosophical discussions.

To discredit a bridge it suffices to call it rotten. To make people persecute a dog, although it be a noble one, it is enough to use the adjective 'rabid'. In the early Christian era, to call an individual Christian was a way to outlaw him. Later the enemy of the Roman Empire was called barbarian to justify persecuting him. Before the French Revolution free thinkers – liberals, democrats, plebians – were persecuted. At present the best way to unleash persecution against a person regarded as a threat to the ruling class is by calling him Communist.

The Colombian ruling class has considered the church and the army their unconditional allies. When priests or military men are dissatisfied and do not conform, it is natural for the ruling class to believe that its internal structure is beginning to crack. Therefore, rebellious priests and military men constitute a much more dangerous element of the system than do the very members of the Communist party. Hence the need for the ruling class to discredit these priests and military men in the eyes of the public by calling them Communists. Since the press serves the ruling class, it cannot adopt a different attitude.

Q. *Is the Colombian clergy guilty of being Communist or anti-Communist?*

1. [Common Spanish rendering of the English term McCarthyism, referring to the US political phenomenon of the 1950s. – Ed.]

A. The Colombian clergy certainly is not guilty of being Communist. Communism is a philosophical system incompatible with Christianity, although in their socio-economic aspirations the majority of Communists hold precepts not opposed to the Christian faith.

To say the clergy sins as *anti-Communists*, it would be necessary to make a study of the pastoral letters, the writings, the sermons of our bishops and priests. Nevertheless, my personal impression is that Communism has been considered the principal evil by Christianity in our time. This perspective is not very theological and not very scientific.

It is not very theological because in Christianity the principal evil is the lack of love, both for other Christians and for non-Christians, including Communists. Communism as a solution, with all its wisdom and all its fallacies, comes from the lack of real love applied in temporal structures in a **scientific form by Christians**.

From the scientific point of view, the position of the Christian should not be anti-anything but pro-humanity. If this good of all mankind cannot be achieved except by changing the temporal structures, it would be sinful for Christians to oppose change. Only the discriminating and scientific criticism of Communism – with the well-being of all men in mind – justifies not an anti-Communist but a scientific attitude that implies rejecting everything **anti-scientific**.

Q. *Do you think that the attitude of the Colombian clergy about social problems should be changed?*

A. In general, I believe the Colombian clergy does need to change its attitude. The necessary revision could be summarized this way: (1) more concern should be shown for the well-being of mankind than for the protection of mankind from Communism; (2) the clergy should discontinue occasional and paternalistic charity as a habitual form of action; (3) the members of clergy should concentrate their

efforts on preparing members of the laity to transform the temporal structures from the ground up and thus attack the origin of social problems.

Q. Does the Colombian clergy have a capitalistic mentality?

A. To be able to judge the mentality of a social group would require a deep analysis. Nevertheless, I consider that the Colombian clergy at least gives the public the impression that it has a mentality more feudal than capitalistic or, at best, a mentality altogether capitalistic. The feudal mentality is characterized by the desire to own property, ignoring profit, productivity, and service to the community. The capitalistic mentality is characterized by the desire for profit, without considering service to the community.

To the public, the Colombian clergy appears to be a group with desire to own property. I believe that in the highest hierarchical circles – and principally in the cities – the clergy appears to be a group with desire for profit. The Colombian public does not seem to be aware that the church spends money to serve the community.

Q. Should Communism be outlawed?

A. From the theoretical point of view, I believe that the best weapons to combat ideas are ideas; the best way to combat political movements is by showing a greater efficiency in the use of power. Therefore the laws against political ideas or movements are, in my opinion, a demonstration of weakness.

However, in any country where the Communists are actually excluded from public office, from the right to be elected, from occupying chairs at the university, and in many cases from the right to study and work, it would be less hypocritical to outlaw them officially. It would be less hypocritical than to keep up legal appearances just to dress the real state of affairs in the disguise of democracy and just to prevent the Communists from turning to their advantage the victim mystique that clandestineness would give them.

22. Possibilities for the Left*

Q. What are the predominant political criteria in Latin America?

A. Underdeveloped countries are characterized by the lack of industry, which presupposes division of labour, specialization, and rationalization of human activity. Relations which sociologists call primary, that is to say, face-to-face relations of greater intimacy and depth, such as family and friend relationships, constitute the main factor in social life in underdeveloped countries. Sentiment and tradition govern almost all the institutions, including the political. To associate through programmes with people of different political views is much less common than to support the leaders. Change of political affiliation from one generation to the next or within the period of a person's life is considered treason.

In countries that are classified as underdeveloped but in which political formation is more advanced, we encounter a greater influence of ideology and rational elements. However, this influence is exercised on a normal plane of speculative theories. The underdeveloped countries that were colonized by the West, by such deep-rooted, philosophical, and Cartesian cultures as the Spanish, have difficulty in adopting empirical and positive values.

Latin-American countries in general, and especially those that have had at the same time a new and reduced immigration and a relatively large indigenous or mixed population, face the problem of the co-existence of two cultures within the same nation. One culture, typically Western, is based on a system of patrimony of a small privileged class descended

* [Published in *La Gaceta* (Bogotá, Ediciones Tercer Mundo), May 1965. — Ed.]

from the Creole; the other culture is of mixed type, composed of both indigenous elements and Western elements in proportions which vary from country to country.

The process of acculturation of the indigenous or mixed masses has followed general laws. Material acculturation has been imposed, while non-material acculturation has taken place largely in exterior form only. We Latin-Americans have received judicial, political, religious, and economic institutions in their exterior form without having assimilated the content of these institutions into our values and modes of conduct. This is particularly true of the lower class.

When the Creoles, who had their own culture along with Western bourgeois capitalist problems, had to face the emancipation movement, they could not respond suitably to the reality of the masses; instead, they offered only imported solutions. Thus, a movement of such popular origin as that of the Commoners in Colombia received no help from the Creole bourgeois, who were occupied in the translation and spreading of the Western-originated 'rights of man', and who later lost precious moments towards our independence debating concepts copied from abroad, such as federalism and centralism. The 'Patria Boba', which embodied the traditional ideological colonialism of our ruling class, has been prolonged in less obvious forms to this day.

The predominant political criteria in underdeveloped countries, then, are the sentimental and traditional, the normative and speculative, and those emanating from an ideological colonialism.

Q. How do you see our political parties?

A. The political parties in Colombia have been a reflection of the criteria just mentioned. They copied, in principle, the denominational patterns and philosophies of the parties already created in Europe. However, in principle, some socio-economic fundamentals were found to establish the difference between Liberals and Conservatives. Today, religious and

ideological differences as well as socio-economic differences have practically disappeared. From 1930 on, partisan competition began to concentrate around the bureaucratic and budgetary pork barrel, competition which grew with the multiplication of the budgetary figure following the tax reforms of 1936. The survival of the two traditional parties in Colombia must be explained by functional factors useful to both the ruling class and the popular class.

In every society, belonging to a group provides personal security. This phenomenon is even more noticeable in the societies of underdeveloped countries, where formal institutions for personal and social security are lacking. In Colombia, belonging to one of the traditional parties is a form of acquiring security. If, moreover, the party is one of the few multiple class groups, in which the private citizen finds elements of identification with members of the highest social class, the function of providing security is often more important. If we add to this the sentimental and traditional element, with the psychological and sociological security it brings, we understand the importance which the political parties have for the popular class.

The ruling classes constituted a minority representing conflicting philosophical and socio-economic interests, interests which were grasped by the masses only in their most rudimentary and irrational forms. When these conflicts between the ruling classes disappeared, political affiliation constituted a traditional link with the popular class. When social and economic problems worsened in the entire world and in Colombia, the Liberal-Conservative problem began to transform itself into a class problem.

By dividing Colombian society vertically and by grouping the popular class in the electoral struggles into opposing factions of sentiment and tradition, the political parties impeded the formation of a class party. The absence of such a party insured the privileges of the ruling class and its domi-

nation over the majority and popular classes. Thus, while the political party in Colombia gives a psychological security to the popular class, it also gives socio-economic security to the ruling class.

In addition to this, we must add that in any multiple class group the indispensable condition for social ascent is conformity. The demand for conformity is the most efficient instrument of control by a privileged minority on the majority, and as one ascends in the political hierarchy, greater conformity is demanded.

The National Front is the result of the rationalization of a conflict, a conflict of sentiment and a conflict concerning control of the budget and distribution of the bureaucratic pork barrel. The consequences of this conflict – violence and ineffective administration by military government – forced the leaders of both traditional parties to put aside their feelings and to come to agreement on what constituted the apple of discord – budget and bureaucracy. Reciprocal succession and parity of the parties in government were a double-edged instrument, for they executed the distribution contract and guaranteed the continuing division of the popular class by sentiment and tradition. The objectives succeeded very quickly. However, the National Front, which as the first class party in Colombia constitutes a significant landmark in our political history, began to precipitate, as a reaction, the formation of another class party, that of the popular class.

Q. What do you think of our progressive movements?

A. Political criteria predominant in underdeveloped countries have conditioned the orientation of those who have been called leftist Colombian groups. In many cases our progressive leaders bind themselves to an altruistic sentiment, lacking the scientific basis or rationally established tactics which we can identify with that of utopian socialists.

Traditionalism works in them not by action but by reaction. Though the traditional may appear advisable scienti-

fically, it is often rejected through resentment. The normative and speculative spirit makes these same leaders lay emphasis on theoretical planning rather than on developing practical solutions for our socio-economic problems. This orientation is closely linked to the ideological colonialism of our Left. Slogans and clichés are used. A special revolutionary jargon is employed. Superficial solutions to Colombian problems are given. Public demonstrations of solidarity with the oppressed of foreign countries are made, while the situation of the national oppressed is forgotten. Sentimentalism also is translated into personal leadership and frustration. While the small but all-powerful ruling class unites to defend its interests, leftist leaders attack each other, causing confusion in the popular class, and represent in more faithful form the traditional, sentimental, and speculative criteria and the criteria of ideological colonialism.

Q. Are there any possibilities of full integration?

A. The Colombian popular class has been able to detach itself from the political criteria predominant in the underdeveloped countries much faster than the leftist leaders. Some historical circumstances of our national life have brought about the maturation of the political attitudes and conceptions of this class. Violence determined a grass-roots break with social isolation, a conflict between the country dweller and the ruling class, a break with our sentimental and traditional values, a more positive and empirical conception of its (the popular class's) problems and, along the same lines, of the national problems; and from all this began the formation of class consciousness.

The National Front polarized the discontent, now not against an individual, a government, or a party but rather towards a system, a ruling class. The official and private communal action programmes, the technical assistance brought by agrarian reform, and other official and private programmes helped to awaken, along with the consciousness of their own

needs, a class consciousness. They have created security in the popular groups; they have begun to form habits of organization and self-leadership in the labour and farming communities.

The popular class seems disillusioned with the democratic electoral systems, and so it boycotts the electoral assemblies. It does not consider itself represented by the leaders of the Left, whose programme seems unsuitable and whose interests are often egotistical. The popular class more and more trusts in itself and distrusts the elements of the other classes.

It is necessary for the intellectuals who desire the well-being of the popular class to be aware of their responsibility in the political and social opportunity of the moment. The people need concrete national objectives of socio-economic development. The people need unity with a technical and rational basis. The people need a group of leaders whose programme is essentially realistic and adapted to the concrete Colombian circumstances. The people need leaders who are capable of abandoning all self-seeking for the attainment of a scientific ideal. The people need leaders who are capable of abandoning all traditional and sentimental elements not justified by technology. The people need leaders capable of abstaining from philosophical and normative elements (not in their personal life or in their ultimate objectives but in their representation of the disjointed elements among all those who seek concrete and scientifically justified action) in favour of the majorities and in favour of the country. The people need leaders who are capable of abstaining from imported theoretical schemes and of utilizing their capabilities to seek Colombian paths for a definitive and solid transformation of Colombian institutions.

23. Expropriation of Church Property*

Q. *Is the land reform not revolutionary?*

A. I believe that the application of the present land reform is not revolutionary.

I believe that the land-reform law represents an agreement among our ruling classes. The industrialists and progressive agriculturists made a law which is one more of agricultural promotion than of agrarian reform because the land is paid for at commercial prices. The landowner is allowed to keep as much as 100 hectares which is excessive in many cases, as in the irrigated districts. Moreover, no stipulation assures us that the high prices paid for the purchase of land will be reinvested in the rural areas. In addition, properties adequately developed outside irrigated districts are exempt from expropriation. With all these limitations, the Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform (INCORA) must turn to the tasks of creating irrigation districts, increasing balance of trade, and modernizing agriculture. But it cannot truly redistribute the land. Neither can it make a redistribution of national income. And these are the two main objectives of true agrarian reform.

Q. *What are the defects and virtues of INCORA?*

A. I believe that I know the Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform rather well, and it seems to me that it is an organization which, even in comparison with private enterprise, is well-organized and efficiently operated. I believe that there is a team of young people there with a great sense of patriotism, dedicating their work, their energies, and their intelligence to their work, which, as I said before, is to build

* [Interview, published in *La República* (Bogotá), 21 June 1965. - Ed.]

up the agricultural industry and to create a series of important internal structures in the country.

One great defect I find in the Institute is that it does not concern itself enough with the education of peasants. I do not speak of education so much in a formal sense – that is, the building of schools and organizing of cooperatives – but rather in the informal sense of developing among the peasants an awareness of themselves as a group and of organizing them into a major pressure group so that in the future they may be able to transform this false land reform into a true land reform carried out by peasants.

Q. In Putumayo, especially around Sibundoy, the agrarian reform is opposed by the religious community. You are a sociologist and a priest. From what point of view do you make your analysis?

A. From the reports that I have received – I am not personally, directly familiar with the situation – it seems to me that this is a classic case in which the church has not been able to resist the temptation of economic and political power. It is not just that the missionary priests have too much land – although they do have. I believe that fundamentally they oppose the work of the INCORA because they believe they would lose political power, that is to say, they would lose control over the Indians whom they are organizing into a kind of theocracy.

In many places this has also happened with communal action. For example, the case of Tunjuelito, I believe, has completely contradicted the idea that the church loses influence by permitting the believers of a given community to promote private enterprise and other institutions that benefit the members of a parish.

By opposing communal action, as they oppose land reform, many parish priests have made themselves more unpopular; and I believe that the missionary fathers are going to make themselves very unpopular – although perhaps not imme-

diately or openly – if they continue this opposition. I believe that the Indians someday will understand that they are being deprived of a great benefit and that this is being done with a totally sectarian spirit. Therefore, I intend to try to promote all these things when the parishes are integrated. If these missionary fathers in Sibundoy were the vanguard of land reform and of the INCORA, then in the long run, even more immediately, they would acquire great popularity and great influence, not a paternalistic but, rather, a truly democratic influence.

Q. Would you support the expropriation of church property if a revolution were carried out by force?

A. I do support the expropriation of church property even if a revolution does not occur.

24. Laicization

*Letter to the Cardinal**

Your Eminence :

In agreement with our conversation, it seems to me that, as a testimony of loyalty to the church and to what I consider fundamental in Christianity, I must ask your Eminence for reduction to the lay state and for exoneration from the obligations of my status as member of the clergy.

In anticipation that your Eminence will graciously grant this petition, I permit myself to sign myself

Faithfully in Christ . . .

* [Torres to Luis Concha Córdoba, Cardinal Archbishop of Bogotá, 24 June 1965. – Ed.]

*Statement to the Press **

When circumstances prevent men from actively consecrating their lives to Christ, it is the priest's duty to combat these circumstances even if he must forfeit the right to officiate at Eucharistic rites, which have meaning only if Christians are so consecrated.

Within the present structure of the church, it has become impossible for me to continue acting as priest in the external aspects of our religion. However, the Christian priesthood consists not only of officiating at external ritual observances. The Mass, which is at the centre of the priesthood, is fundamentally communal. But the Christian community cannot worship in an authentic way unless it has first effectively put into practice the precept of love for fellow man. I chose Christianity because I believed that in it I would find the purest way to serve my fellow man. I was chosen by Christ to be a priest forever because of the desire to consecrate my full time to the love of my fellow man.

As a sociologist, I have wanted this love to be translated into efficient service through technology and science. My analysis of Colombian society made me realize that revolution is necessary to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and procure a life of well-being for the needy majority of our people. I believe that the revolutionary struggle is appropriate for the Christian and the priest. Only by revolution, by changing the concrete conditions of our country, can we enable men to practise love for each other.

Throughout my ministry as priest, I have tried in every way possible to persuade the laymen, Catholic or not, to join the revolutionary struggle. In the absence of a massive response, I have resolved to join the revolution myself, thus

* [Statement published in *El Tiempo* (Bogotá), 25 June 1965. – Ed.]

carrying out part of my work of teaching men to love God by loving each other. I consider this action essential as a Christian, as a priest, and as a Colombian. But such action, at this time, is contrary to the discipline of the present church. I do not want to break the discipline of the church, but I also do not want to betray my conscience.

Therefore, I have asked his Eminence the Cardinal to free me from my obligations as a member of the clergy so that I may serve the people on the temporal level. I forfeit one of the privileges I deeply love – the right to officiate as priest at the external rites of the church. But I do so to create the conditions that will make these rites more authentic.

I believe that my commitment to live a useful life, efficiently fulfilling the precept of love for my fellow man, demands this sacrifice of me. The highest standard by which human decisions must be measured is the all-surpassing love that is true charity. I accept all the risks that this standard demands of me.

*Last Clarification**

The Cardinal reduced me to the lay state by a decree in which he says that this reduction will be in accord with a rescript which will come from Rome; but that rescript has not arrived. In Rome they asked him to speak to me before imposing the sanction on me, and he did not heed that order.

* [Published in *Frente Unido*, 30 September 1965; motivated by a statement by Cardinal Concha, attacking Torres, issued 20 September and published in *El Espectador*, 24 September 1965. The Cardinal said that Torres's reduction to lay state 'is not a simple temporary permission ... with the supposition that afterwards he will be able to return to the exercise of his priestly functions'. The Cardinal said that the 'ecclesiastical authority ... categorically disapproves of the procedures of Camilo Torres because they are opposed to the doctrines of the Catholic church'. – Ed.]

Disgracefully, the Cardinal gives the appearance of continuing in the same key, without explaining or proving that I am against the Catholic church. It seems that he acted under the pressure of the groups who have control of the country.

The public statements of his Eminence the Cardinal are contrary to his private statements. When I spoke personally with him, we saw that the only way to save his conscience and mine was for me to ask for reduction to the lay state. He told me it was a sad decision for him, but he also hoped that, at the moment I would consider convenient, I could return to the exercise of my priesthood, at which time he would receive me with open arms.

25. Crossroads of the Church in Latin America

*Love and Revolution**

Whether the church is strong or weak in Latin America is a puzzle to any outsider visiting us and even a puzzle to us Latin-Americans ourselves. When we fly over our cities we see a profusion of domes and spires. On the ground we see the interior of the various Catholic churches so prominent in all the tourist pamphlets of the continent. In every town, in almost every village, we see the priests – the *padrecitos*, as the simple people call them; the *curas*, as they are called in the city. The bishop, archbishop, or cardinal is, undoubtedly, one of the leading authorities in every Latin-American country.

* [Undated MS, but written after Torres's laicization in 1965. – Ed.]

The experience of the priest who travels around Latin America is also significant. Although almost everywhere there is a difference among the attitudes prevalent in the various sectors of the population, among workers and intellectuals the priest is usually received with open hostility. There is no middle ground.

However, when we review history, we find strange things. In almost all countries during the nineteenth century or at the beginning of the twentieth, church property was confiscated, and laws were passed against the interests of the institution, that is, against what the hierarchy considered to be the interests of the institution. For a priest in those countries, it is still difficult to teach in a state-operated college or university. I believe that in Latin America there is not a single country in which a church has not been burned or priests not persecuted. When we speak confidentially with Latin-American Catholics, even with those who are church-goers, the majority tell us that they are anti-clerical, that they do not like priests.

What is happening then in the Latin-American church? It has many times been said that our Catholics are fetishists. There may be many manifestations of this. What indeed is evident is that in the preaching and teaching of Christian morality, what the church insists upon most is external conformity. This is true even in sexual matters.

It is cynically said that officiating at external observances is what produces most money for the priest. However, there are many external practices – very popular and not specifically Christian – which represent no profit to the church; even so, the priests insist on these practices. As heirs of Spanish Catholicism, we emphasize the external. It is the easiest and the most impressive, the most obvious.

Spanish evangelism was begun and continued en masse. In the midst of the Counter Reformation, the conversion of Indians was carried out with catechisms full of formulas in-

comprehensible to them. The Indians were forced to memorize these formulas word for word to be eligible for baptism and to make the missionary feel like a good apostle of Christ.

The Spanish crown was cautious. It knew the influence of the clergy and prevented the Indians from entering the clergy. At the time of Independence from Spain, Latin America had been widely converted to Christianity. Widely, but not deeply. There had been much baptism but there were few Christian principles or convictions. Furthermore, the shortage of clergy caused by the emigration of the Spanish priests made the situation worse. The Latin-American church continued to be a church of external rites, not of Christian faith. Even today, when workers of the city are asked, 'What is the Holy Trinity?' they almost always readily reply, 'The Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Nevertheless, we Latin-Americans love each other, but not always in a rational or constructive way. Among the common people there is love, cooperation, hospitality, and a spirit of service. The upper class is different. At the risk of generalizing unduly, I can say that those who make the greatest fuss about their faith and their support for the clergy are those who love their fellow man least and that those who serve their brothers most are many times those who do not take part in the external rites of the church. All those who are, are not in; and all those who are in, are not.¹ A real Christian can be identified by the love he demonstrates. When the people speak of Catholics, they refer to external observances. The church seems to be made up of a majority of persons who fulfil their external obligations and do not understand the Christian faith; they practise it only externally. Can either of these be said to be Christian? If

1. [Because of the difference between the two Spanish verbs for 'to be', *estar* and *ser*, the original sentence ('No están todos los que son ni son todos que están') clearly means that not all Christians are in the church, nor are all in the church Christians. - Ed.]

they have bad faith, certainly not. Those who love, even if they are fetishists or believe they are atheists, are Christians. These people belong in spirit to the church, and if they are baptized they belong to the church in body as well.

The situation seems totally abnormal. Those who love do not have faith, and those who have faith – at least as faith is externally defined – do not love. ‘... he who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the Law,’ says Saint Paul (Romans xiii, 18). ‘Love and you may do what you please,’ said Saint Augustine. The surest proof of predestination is love for our fellow man.

Saint John tells us: ‘If anyone says, “I love God”, and hates his brother, he is a liar. For how can he who does not love his brother, whom he sees, love God, whom he does not see?’ (I John iv, 20).

However, this love for fellow man must be effective. We will not be judged by our good intentions alone but principally by our actions serving Christ, who is represented in each of our fellow men: ‘For I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me no drink’ (Matthew xxv, 42).

In Latin America, in the conditions that exist here today, we see that it is not possible to feed, provide clothing for, or house the majority of our people. Those who are in power constitute that economic minority which dominates through its control over those who hold political power, cultural power, military power, and – unfortunately – even ecclesiastical power in countries in which the church has temporal goods. This minority will not make decisions against its own interests. Therefore, governmental decisions are not made in favour of the majorities. To give them food, drink, and clothing requires basic decisions that can only come from the government. We already have the technical solutions – or we will have them. But who decides whether to apply them?

The minority, against its own interests? A group acting against its own interests would be a sociological absurdity.

Then the seizure of power by the majorities must be preached. The majority must take over the government to change the structures through economic, social, and political reforms that favour the majority. This is called revolution. If it is necessary in order for men to love each other, the Christian must be revolutionary. How difficult it is for those who believe themselves Catholics to understand this! But how easy it is to understand it if we reflect on what we have just said about the church!

Christians, Catholics, seem to be stoical spectators at the collapse of a world that seems not to be their concern. They do not commit themselves to the struggle. In reading the phrase 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John xviii, 36), they take 'world' to mean 'present life', not 'sinful life', which is its real meaning. They forget Christ's prayer to His Father: 'I do not pray that thou take them out of the world, but that thou keep them from evil' (John xvii, 15).

Many times, men leave the world but are not kept from evil. If the members of the community love each other, the priest offers the Eucharist more genuinely. This is not an individual but rather a collective offering. An offering should be made to God only if those who offer it love one another.

Hence, if the laity is not committed to the fight for well-being of their brothers, the priesthood tends to become ritualistic, individualistic, and superficial. The priest has the obligation to take the place of the laity in its temporal commitment if the love of fellow man so demands. When this love seems no longer to be considered exclusive patrimony of the church, it is necessary to testify that the communal spirit of the church is love. Unfortunately, the public does not recognize the testimony of the laity as the testimony of the church. The priest, in this case, should give the testimony of the church until the public is educated to understand that

the testimony of every baptized person is a testimony of the church.

To see a priest involved in political struggles, abandoning the external practices of his priesthood, is something repugnant to our traditional mentality. However, let us consider for a while that his priestly testimony and love for fellow man may impel him to this commitment to be true to his own conscience and, hence, to be true to God.

When Christians live fundamentally motivated by love and teach others to love, when faith is manifest in life and especially in divine life, in the life of Jesus and the church, then the external rites will be the true expressions of love within the Christian community; then we will be able to say that the church is strong, not in economic or political power but in love. If a priest's temporal commitment in political struggles contributes to this end, his sacrifice would appear to be justified.

*Love and Politics**

The Constitution says that it guarantees religious freedom, freedom of conscience. On the other hand, the Concordat says that the only religion which can be taught in colleges and universities is the Catholic religion.

To me it is obvious that the Concordat of 1887 was a bilateral pact. But it is also true that all these problems of the relations between the church and the state, with their consequences affecting freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, and other freedoms, are going to be dealt with by the Council. I may not altogether agree that the Concordat must be revised. The reason is very simple: the deliberations

* [Interview of Torres and two other rebel priests (whose interventions have been omitted), published in *C.N.P. Reporter* (Bogotá), August-September 1965. - Ed.]

of the Vatican Council will probably result in the termination of the Concordat: The conclusions they are reaching there show once more that our Concordat is unique in the world: it is the most anachronistic, the only one that has not been reformed, largely because it has been used as a political instrument. In the church the Concordat is a taboo subject. It cannot be spoken of for fear of causing a schism. It is obvious that all these relations between church and state are going to have to be changed. It must be kept in mind, I repeat, that the Concordat has been converted into a political instrument, the object of disputes between the traditional parties.

When we succeed in changing the structure of political power and when the Catholic church becomes poor, we will be better able to change its structure. Which should we change first, the economic inner structure or the political superstructure? Let us change the external structure of the church. Let us put it into the hands of the popular class!

I believe that possession of temporal goods unfortunately makes the Catholic church in Colombia, at least the hierarchy, follow the counsel of men more than the wisdom of God.

The Declaration of the Bishops of 7 July 1965 shows some evidence of progress when compared with their former attitudes. This declaration of the hierarchy has been an important event. It would be good in Switzerland or in the United States; but we must not overlook how it leaves untouched such vital matters as private property.

Yes, there is clerical politics in what the bishops declare. They try to defend themselves, and to defend themselves they open the door just a little to the encyclicals of John XXIII. Anyway, there is a difference between this declaration and the defence of the rich in the most recent declaration of the Cardinal.

It is true that in the bishops' new declaration there is no

mention of the rights of the people. They speak of private property limited for the common good. State intervention also has as its norm the common good. Of course, not everything is intended for Colombia, but in general, it does seem that there is a new concept and that, through the providence of God, we have collaborated in progress.

The church is not bound to any temporal system. As a result of attempts to link itself to temporal systems, when the barbarians invaded the Roman Empire, it was said that the church was finished. Likewise, when the French Revolution was successful, the church was declared finished because the old régime and the monarchy had fallen. And today, when the capitalist system is coming to an end, some people believe that the church is being destroyed. They believe that Christianity does not have enough flexibility to be able to Christianize the socialist world towards which we seem to be going.

Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the church represents a philosophy rather than a political or economic system. It represents a way to live. The love of men for each other takes different shapes. I repeat: this love of men for each other takes different shapes, depending on the technology of our time, the historical crossroads we face, and the society in which we live. It may be that some political parties express this love for man better than others. But it would be hard to prove that the parties most united to the exterior structure of the church are those which best fulfil the Christian commitment of love for all mankind.

26. Three Letters to the ELN*

6 July 1965

My dear companion Helio:

Only upon my arrival from Lima did I know of your wish that I come so that we might coordinate the legal action with the underground action. I still have the opportunity to do much legal work before finally coming. I think I must resist as long as it is possible for me. As my immediate work, I am agitating in all the cities of the country, forming groups of urban supporters who are, for the present, studying and distributing the platform of the United Front. (I will send you the copies which were published in Lima and are being distributed throughout Latin America.) These same groups established the network for the circulation of the periodical *Revolución Colombiana* (Colombian Revolution), addressed to workers and peasants, which will be distributed throughout the entire country (500,000 copies).

The situation could not be better. The trade-union sectors are also ready to support armed warfare. It is the same with some sectors of the middle class, with the university students,

* [Intercepted by the Fifth Artillery Brigade of the regular Colombian army on 9 August 1965, near Hoya Ciega, in the Department of Santander, when it captured the guerrillero José Dolacio Durán Nova, who apparently had these letters among a series of ELN documents. Among Torres's personal papers, Reverend Germán Guzmán found copies of them, which he marked Personal Documents 16, 17, and 18 (see his *Camilo Torres*, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1969). The names (indicated by a - in this text) were left out by Torres both in the original and in the copy, obviously for security reasons. 'Helio' is the code name of Fabio Vásquez Castaño, commander in chief of the Army of National Liberation (ELN). 'Alfredo Castro' (or just 'Alfredo') was apparently Torres's code name. FU, of course, stands for Frente Unido (United Front). - Ed.]

and even with sectors of the upper class. There are possibilities of division in the army. I have made first contacts with a general and two colonels. A military chaplain informed me that all the colonels and those below this rank are with me. Of course, this has to be treated very delicately; we must seek their commitment very carefully, or it could be the end for all of us. The popular fervour is extraordinary, and it is necessary to take advantage of it in a truly revolutionary way.

Let me know what you think, but it seems to me that the most important jobs are: (1) to strike sure and continuous blows, widening the base more each time; (2) to try to co-ordinate actions with the other groups, principally with the MOEC, the Vanguard of the MRL, the New Party, the ORC, the Young Christian Democrats, and the Communist party, all of which have prepared groups;¹ (3) to create urban groups; (4) to purchase a printing press and to hide it (the financing is practically complete); (5) to obtain the division of the army; (6) if the rest happens, to plan a march on the cities for the seizure of power. In this last case I would unite myself to you only after having succeeded in obtaining the neutrality of the army. If this is not obtained, then I would unite myself with you when the legal work begins to be too difficult for me. This depends on the degree of repression, but I figure it will happen in two or three months.

At the present moment I believe that every minute I lose in the legal battle is time that I lose in the revolution. Tomorrow, Wednesday, I have a large group in Cali which I pleased before. Therefore, if the contact does not come, I will return to Bucaramanga. I understand that my trip to Lima

1. [The MOEC (Workers, Students, and Peasants Movement) was pro-Chinese; the MRL (Revolutionary Liberal Movement) had once been a leftist movement but was now opportunistic, except for its youth, the Vanguard; the New Party and the ORC were made up of independent left wingers; the Communist party was pro-Russian. - Ed.]

prevented the peasants in Bogotá from coordinating things better. We will continue to communicate with one another through them.

I would like to know your opinion on my plans. I aspire not to be the leader but to serve until the end. I was visiting your family, trying to explain to them the total Christian meaning of our fight. They are well and very much with us. I believe that they were consoled when I left. Your mother told me that she was praying for the cause. If you decide on coordination with the other armed groups, I offer you my contacts with all those I think are good enough. When you think that I am more necessary here than outside, I ask you to tell me. I will consult with the others about it, and I believe that what I decide will have in mind the triumph of the revolution. Tell all the companions that they have all the Colombian and Latin-American people and the poor of the entire world behind them and hoping for them. I hope to have the honour of finding myself among you as soon as it is necessary.

Accept a sincere hug from your brother and unconditional companion in the war of national liberation.

Alfredo Castro

P.S. We hope to be able to publish the news in the periodical *Insurrección*² in order to have national public opinion informed. The periodical is also practically financed.

22 July 1965

Dear brother and companion Helio :

The revolution continues to go forward in a truly stupendous way. The popular sentiment seems unanimous in Cúcuta, Ocaña, Convención, Río de Oro, and Bucaramanga.

2. [*Insurrección* (*Insurrection*) is the clandestine newspaper of the ELN. — Ed.]

I have tried to explain the processes and to foresee the future everywhere. In every place (although not in Bucaramanga) a coordinating committee of the United Front has been set up in which those aligned in political groups are the minority. With the 'comrades',³ as always from the very beginning, there have been difficulties because of their desire for control, but it seems that they are learning little by little. They have helped us much. I have continued to insist on the necessity of forming basic committees, first to discuss and publish the platform, afterwards to publish the periodical, and then to form regional committees and a national committee. The national committee will give the assignments to the United Front for the seizure of power. I have tried to explain it by showing that in a state of siege, for example, we cannot take a plaza or a city with a demonstration. Power is taken when the peasants can control a plantation, a large farm, a highway, a factory, a region, a city. As you will see, all these plans lead us to realize that formation is necessary. As you will also understand, I would not have made all these plans if it were not for my knowing what you have done and are doing. What I learned in the mountains has always been a stimulus, an example, and a secure help in this whole campaign of agitation.

In each city I have also left one or two persons who will help with the secrecy we have spoken about. It is clear that they need a test, but something is better than nothing.

I will continue to direct the periodical. The manager is Israel Arjona; the assistant director, Julio Cortés; the head compositor, one of the linotype unionists. About — I need your decision soon. I do not see clearly. He can accompany me constantly as political adviser. It would be very good for him to dedicate himself to the administration of the periodical in order to control that more. It would be very good to have a bodyguard from the ELN. I am very pleased with you and

3. [That is, the members of the Communist party. — Ed.]

with the ELN for the magnificent collaboration and effectiveness in Bacaramanga and in the outing at Santander. As administrator, — would help me to obtain the offset press and to mount the publications apparatus for which I cannot really rely on anyone. The finances are now in the hands of —. For the offset we already have the money. The finances are not very good. I think we have \$70,000⁴ (not counting the money for the offset press). I will leave the secret contacts to —. Please give me all the suggestions which you think are necessary. I will always accept them as from a brother and companion in the liberation of Colombia. Regards to all the companions. Remind them of the hope which all of you signify and the moral foundation which they represent for us. If they need —, even though we need him, we will send him to you. I hope you are taking care of yourself. Your companion and brother,

Alfredo

Cherished Helio :

7 August 1965

I received your letter of July 8th and it pleased me very much. Since my last letter I have been to meetings in El Valle, a good part of the coast, and finally Medellín. In each city we have left behind trained committees of the FU — some very good, others ordinary. What is much more important, we have always found someone for that which interests us, the war. We have found people to support it and participate actively in it. The exposition of my personal thesis on abstention, which the enemies understand to be the thesis of the FU, has provoked a brutal reception on the part of the leaders and has permitted the rise now of the first enemies within the government opposition (López and the ANAPO).⁵

4. [In Colombian pesos. \$1 (US) = \$15 (Colombia). — Ed.]

5. [Lopez was head of the MRL; the ANAPO, Alianza Nacional Popular (National Popular Alliance), was the party of former dictator Rojas Pinilla, head of the country's right-wing opposition. — Ed.]

I did not try to neutralize the clergy, which is important, but I had a very long chat with Rojas with the result that at present their opposition is not so deep. We must, naturally, test it. — knows them all personally, which will also be very important afterwards.

The brutal repression directed by the church in Medellín has also provoked very important reactions in our favour. The open support of the trade unions and student organizations could now be sensed. Parliamentarians were naturally the most discussed; but I tell you that — has just left the MRL to work full-time with the FU and that Ruíz Novoa lost even more prestige for wanting to take advantage of his support for his dissident branch of the MDN.⁶ As was expected, the round table with Zalama was something I consider useless, even though several of the assistants have found that he left it in a very bad state. Within one hour we left with — and — for Villavo, and it is possible that other companions might travel there by land tomorrow. The periodical is always out on the 26th, and we already have enough brigades for its distribution. I will be in Bogotá that day, and I will personally organize one of the brigades. For the periodical (the legal aspect of the FU) we have obtained a small office, which, although it is lacking in any luxury, has the great advantages of being cheap, legalizing the FU, and assuring easy contact with all the people. These goals were all very important.

Naturally, those lizards flock there like flies, but you know as well as I do that very soon they will retreat and that in the moment of the first danger they will disappear by themselves. The work nuclei of non-aligned people are already being formed, and from the 23rd to the 28th (between Villavo and Tolima) I will devote myself principally to work in the

6. [The MDN (Democratic National Movement) was founded by former general Ruíz Novoa; it vacillated between right-wing opposition and a nationalist stance. — Ed.]

slums, above all in those which already have an embryo of a FU committee. Let will tell you that — is going to sign a contract for the offset press. He will work with — to learn how to handle it and he will run the apparatus full-time. — failed me in the sense that he cannot help us with more than \$10,000 for the offset and the FU is not in condition to help. The finances are bad enough, but I am not overly anxious.

I am completely in agreement with all the points treated in your letter and it is truly the path we are following. Your decision about — is marvellous; I sincerely believe that he is the person indicated to accompany me. In Medellín, especially, his presence at my side was very useful.

We spoke for a long time with — about the security measures, and I believe that today everything will be organized. As far as — in relation to — I am in agreement with you. The first is already working, but — will have a long chat with him.

I am writing you on the run today. When I return from Villavo, I will have more time to be able to fill you in on all that is being done, especially what is being done about the organization and the important contacts.

In reference to the 'comrades', the old *pacos*⁷ are giving me a hard time. Until now, I have privately shown them that I do not like their activity, but I think that within a short time I will have to do it publicly, but with the necessary tact, of course.

Tell Doctor — that we await his works for the periodical.
A hug for everyone.

Last news: — would like to travel with me; what do you say? Is your offer to travel firm?

Alfredo

7. [Old-line Communist hacks. — Ed.]

27. Address to Union Delegates*

I want to thank all the unions present here and all of you attending this meeting. I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to interpret and explain the goals of so many of us, to outline them with all of you, and to explore deeply this question: Why must we Colombians make fundamental changes in our institutions, especially in our political structure of power? It is important to state, first, exactly why a revolution is necessary, second, what the revolution should entail, and, third, how the working class should take part in the revolution.

Revolution is not simply a fashionable word, a popular word. When we realize that, at this time in Colombia, political power, economic power, cultural power, ecclesiastical power, and military power have all been concentrated in a few hands, when we realize that these hands do not represent the majority but rather the minorities, and when we realize that those who represent these minorities – in which the majorities see no reflection of themselves – are those who hold political power and the power to decide the fundamental transformations of the country, then we must reach the conclusion that the minorities can not go on making the decisions. Why? Because the minorities are always going to make decisions according to the interests of their own group, not according to the interests of the majority.

Many times individuals, because they are apostles or are bitter or have some very particular reason, do make decisions

* [Transcription of an address to union delegates and the public (mostly workers) at the headquarters of the Bavarian Union in Bogotá on 14 July 1965; published in *Vanguardia Sindical* (Bogotá), 23 July 1965. – Ed.]

against their own group. Therefore, it is our hope that individuals of the bourgeois class – intellectuals, priests, military men – will in many cases adopt attitudes that do not coincide with the traditional interests of their group. However, although we do expect this from individuals, we do not expect it from groups to which these individuals belong. We expect it from individuals because otherwise we would have to exclude any person of bourgeois extraction from participating in the revolution.

Even I would have to be excluded, because, unfortunately, I am of bourgeois extraction and because – also unfortunately, in some ways – I also belong to the clergy. If we excluded all the bourgeois, we would have to exclude any military man of good will; but among them we find individuals who can collaborate in the revolution. We will require, naturally, that any person of bourgeois extraction – and therefore suspect – give very concrete proof that he is not an opportunist joining the revolution for the ulterior motive of climbing to a position that might have been denied him within his own group.

He must prove that he joins the revolution to serve the popular class. Therefore, we must demand that the members of the bourgeois class – the military men, the clergy, the intellectuals, the professionals, and all other members of the middle class – prove their good intentions not simply with nice words but by risking something: their money, their safety, the quiet routine of their existence, or whatever else.

Therefore, I considered it indispensable to my vocation as priest and my vocation as revolutionary that I prove my willingness to serve the cause of the people. When I was faced with the dilemma, forced to choose whether I would follow the discipline of the clergy or continue in the revolutionary struggle, I could not hesitate. Otherwise, I would have betrayed the revolution by betraying you.

When the workers of Medellín told me, 'You must go

on', I did not experience a moment of reluctance to sacrifice something very precious to me – the external practice of my priesthood. I would like for this to be accepted as proof of my sincerity. But you must continue to make demands of me, as I must continue to make demands of all of you of bourgeois origin who are going through the same trial.

How much will you demand? Everything – all the way to the final consequences. The revolutionary struggle is not just any struggle: it is a struggle in which what is committed is not hours; what is committed is not pesos. It is a struggle in which life itself must be committed. We can accept people who are just friendly to the revolution, fans of the revolution. But to accept someone as revolutionary, we must demand that he be a full-time revolutionary.

As we said, in the revolution we must accept members of groups not in the popular class who often act against the interests of their own groups. But it would be absurd to demand that the group itself act against its group interests. Conversely, we can find workers who betray the working class, but it is difficult to believe that a whole group of workers would act against its own interests. The same is true of the groups that make up the ruling class. Here we find why it is necessary to take power out of the hands of the minority group, the ruling class: a minority group, in a country like ours, will have a great number of interests opposed to those of the majorities. When there is a conflict of interest, naturally the one who, as the saying goes, 'has his hand on the wheel', the one who has the power in his hands, will decide in favour of his own group. We can see this in many examples.

Sometimes the Colombian problem is described to us as a technical problem. We listen to very erudite, very detailed explanations presenting statistics, outlining solutions, showing how our import problems and our currency problems could be handled. These disquisitions are very exact, very learned, and very full of wisdom. But why do the same con-

ditions continue? What is the use of producing television programmes, publishing books, undertaking studies and projects, and printing reports in newspapers – all very precisely, very clearly – about the agrarian problems of Colombia and its solutions? We are told what the solutions to our agrarian problems are, how we could industrialize successfully, how the housing problem can be solved, how currency can be stabilized; yet none of these problems are ever solved. Why do the people of Colombia remain indifferent to all these theoretical solutions, indifferent even to scientific studies and proposals that are so true, so exact? Why do the people remain indifferent to the formation of high-level commissions, medium-level commissions, or highest-level commissions? Why do the people remain completely indifferent?

Because they know that the problem is not in *finding* the solutions. We do have the solutions, but on the high level of authority and power there is no desire to implement them. This is not from lack of solutions, lack of expertise, failure to understand the problems, or ignorance of the solutions. Our ruling class, our oligarchy, is that much more guilty because they do have the solutions in their hands and do not implement them.

Many times the leading newspapers have said that I am not proposing anything new, and they believe that *that* is a serious attack against me. Actually this is perhaps the best way to praise me. It is true. I am not proposing anything new. You know the things I am going to say. The country knows them. The scientists know them. The sociologists know them. I am indeed not saying anything new. Perhaps the only novelty is that I have said these things in public and that, for saying them, I have risked my priest's habit.

That may be something new. What does all this mean then? It means that, if the old things I am repeating have aroused so much enthusiasm despite the fact that they are well known to everybody, what is in order is an accusation

against the ruling class. If what I say is old – saying that power is concentrated in a few hands and that those who hold power do not use it for the good of the majority – if it is well known that those who know the problems are not willing to remedy them, then they are that much more guilty.

Solutions are not lacking for us. When we speak with the man on the street – with the taxi driver, even with the boot-black – when we speak with the peasant, he will tell us, perhaps not in very scientific terms but in the language of common sense, in five or six phrases, just where lie the solutions for our country. This anybody can do; therefore, the ruling class is perplexed. It knows very well that it does not convince anybody by talking about solutions.

And therefore we all feel so deeply deceived when a popular movement, like the strike of the twenty-fifth of January, is cancelled to give it a pauper's burial, to refer the matter to a high-level commission for the recommendation of solutions. As always in Colombia, in any difficult situation, some of us believe that the answer lies in naming commissions to study the solutions, really in naming commissions to try to postpone the solution to the problems, since the solutions are already known: what we do is to name commissions to pass the responsibility on to a few persons who share power and who could already have solved them.

Even the persons who took part in the commission on the sales tax – I do not recall the title given to this commission – cut up the tax pie without convincing the people. The people know that the tax pie, so painstakingly studied, is a pie for the oligarchies but a tax for the popular class. No matter who contributes to make the pie, the popular class knows who is going to eat it.

So it is not for lack of solutions that we are in such dire straits. It is because those who hold power do not want to proceed to put those solutions into effect. And who are those in power? Many times we become furious with the President,

the ministers, or the parliament members – but especially furious with the President. Of course, he is also to blame for the fact that solutions are not applied. But the President is a helpless man surrounded by a number of pressure groups who do whatever they like with him. Therefore our movement should not think about electing one of our own as President, because *as President* he could only take office within the present system. And although he may have advocated revolutionary actions before election, once he is President inside the present system he will have to submit to the same pressures, to the same groups, to the same system which is in favour of the minority and against the majority.

And therefore when anybody has asked me if I abandoned my priesthood to be a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic in the forthcoming elections, I have answered emphatically : NO. I have answered also that we cannot play the game with the oligarchies, involving ourselves in the electoral system controlled by them. We cannot join that comedy of democracy in which, unfortunately, the common people have played a role unfavourable to them, a democracy which really favours no one except the privileged class.

Then what concerns us is not elections under this system, not the Presidency of the Republic. What concerns us is to transform the system from top to bottom, to transform it fundamentally. We must not again allow ourselves to be misled by the myth of elections, unless the popular class controls the electoral system, presents a programme of fundamental change of the institutions, breaks up the present political power system so that the majority constitutes the main pressure group and determines the policy and makes the decisions of the government.

We have already been over this ground many times and have learned that when the oligarchy is frightened it begins to hold out its hand and tries to trip us up, to get us to put the noose around our own necks. It tries to get us to enter its

system; it tries to catch us in its game and to finish us off once and for all. The oligarchy already has had a bitter experience with elections. At times we forget what happened to Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. Rejected by the Liberal party and by the Liberal leadership, with all the electoral machinery rigged against him, he received fewer votes than Gabriel Turbay, as you will remember. But the pressure from the people was so great that the system controlled by the oligarchies got out of hand, and in the next elections he won a majority of the Liberal vote. When the ruling class realized that this game had gone too far, that they had even lost control of the vote and that the machinery had broken down, they had no way out but to end the popular movement by murdering him.

Possibly it is a mistaken tactic for us, the revolutionaries, to refuse to enter into this game now that we see it clearly. But we cannot be accomplices in the farcical democracy staged by our oligarchy. Since we cannot be their accomplices, we must find out what are the real revolutionary procedures.

Actually, the popular class contributes the major share of the national income. You know that labourers alone contribute 35 per cent of the national income. Why do they receive so little from it? Why does so little go to the workers and the peasants, who possess that virtue that Jorge Eliécer Gaitán himself expressed so well, the virtue of being superior to their leaders not only in their awareness but in their commitment, in their fighting spirit, and in their fortitude. Why has the popular class not taken over the government? Because two essential things have failed us, two things that we must **hasten to attain**.

It is important not only that our enthusiasm remains strong, not only that our hope remains firm, but also that a strategy for our struggle, which will be difficult and will require great discipline, is well established. What, then, is indispensable for the popular class to seize power in Colombia?

One of the first conditions is that the popular class must

have a common will. If we do not have common objectives, we are going to be divided. Remember that little skit they show us in which two burros try to eat a stack of hay and each pulls to his own side, so that neither of the two is able to eat the hay until they get together on the objective? If we do not agree on the objectives, we are going to be scattered, each one of us on his own side. The Catholic side is going to be separated from the non-Catholics. The left wingers are going to be divided from the right wingers, the liberals from the conservatives, the peasants from the workers. And those who are in favour of the central union are going to be divided from those who oppose it.

Therefore, we must build a minimum platform on which we can all agree and for which we can all fight. That is why we have distributed copies of our platform which unites us over and above ideologies and religions. It is true that our people, in its majority, are Catholic, or, rather than Catholic, our people are baptized. The essence of Catholicism, the essence of Christianity, is love, so much so that Saint Paul tells us that he who loves his fellow man fulfils the law. So if we were really Catholic, we would not be torn apart by violence, we would not tolerate the oppression of widows, orphans, and the poor, we would see love as the driving force in the institutions. Although we have laws for all this, since in Colombia there are laws for everything, the provisions of the laws are not carried out with love of fellow man but with group egotism. So we can say that Colombia is a country of baptized people and that approximately 96 per cent of the people are registered as Catholics in the census means only that they have been baptized. Perhaps many of those of us who are registered that way have not learned to love our fellow man, and this is the essence of our religion.

In any case we must rise above religious differences. Once more, I repeat, we cannot fight about things that divide us; we must agree about things that unite us. Why do we

Catholics fight the Communists – the people with whom it is said we have most antagonism – over the question of whether the soul is mortal or is immortal instead of agreeing that hunger is indeed mortal? Why do we argue over whether the Catholic church is the true church or whether we should do away with it, while the reactionary sectors, both in the church and outside it, are rallied against us? While we are arguing about whether or not it is necessary to expropriate church property, we are allowing the property of the majority of Colombians to be expropriated. Certainly, we Catholics who ourselves want the church to be poor are not going to fight with those who are against a rich church.

We can agree on matters that unite us beyond religious philosophy, beyond arguments that lead nowhere. As we said also on another occasion, we are like those who reigned in the Byzantine Empire; that is why arguments which serve no purpose are called Byzantine arguments. While the Turks were at the gates of Constantinople, ready to take the city, the theologians were discussing whether the angels were masculine or feminine. While prices are rising, while the National Front is consolidated and does what it pleases against the popular class, while we have a united ruling class making use of the press and other means of communication and also of the church and the army against the popular class, we are arguing about a number of differences, about things that do not directly concern us and that are not the immediate objectives of the revolution.

Therefore, our platform to unite the popular class should not get involved – as I have tried to avoid – in ideology or in philosophy or in religion. That is why you have seen the oligarchy react by pressuring the Catholic hierarchy to declare that platform contrary to Catholic doctrine. But they have never said exactly what those doctrinal problems are. It is natural for them to try to show that this platform can be contrary to the convictions of Catholics. But I believe

that we Catholics can keep our peace of mind because until now the hierarchy has not said wherein our platform is mistaken in doctrine. We can go right ahead. Our platform could be called the platform of Christian Democrats or the platform of the National University Federation or of the Latin-American Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CLASC) or of the Communist party or of the unions of Coltejer. It has been endorsed by all of them.

But our platform also has a characteristic that belongs to no political group in particular. Although it has caused a great deal of scandal, I have defined this characteristic and I believe we who are in the movement must defend it. And that is that anybody who wants to can endorse it. And we will fight alongside anybody who wants to endorse our platform, as long as he is a Colombian loyal to Colombia. If the Popular Alliance wants to back it we will receive them with open arms. If the MRL wants to join us, or those Liberals who want to do something new, or the Conservatives who want to change the country, or the Christian Democrats, we will welcome them all because the platform is not the patrimony of a single group but rather should be – and I hope it is – the patrimony of the entire popular class.

This movement built on our platform is naturally not a movement anti-anything. It is neither against any revolutionary party nor any revolutionary individual. We are not anti-Communist. Neither can we be called Communist. We are revolutionaries, and we believe that among the revolutionaries there is a place for Communists. There is a place for Catholics, for Liberals, for Conservatives, for the ANAPO, and for the Christian Democrats. We do not try to keep the patrimony of the revolution exclusively for ourselves. Just as the platform of the United Front belongs to all the popular class, so must we admit that the revolution does not belong to any one group but to the whole Colombian popular class.

Therefore, we can support this platform and we can in its

name repeat our cry of War to the Death, as the *Libertador* did. We can say that anybody who is revolutionary, wherever he comes from, is our friend and that anybody who is anti-revolutionary, whatever his origin, is our enemy.

Furthermore, this platform should not be tied to a name. In the very statement of purpose it asks that the revolution not be tied to a name but rather to a series of principles, and I am thinking of my particular case when I say that it is important that we depersonalize it more every day. The platform has been circulated in my name and I am extremely proud to have contributed in some way to the unity of the popular class towards the goal of taking over the government. But apart from the social awareness which the platform is going to build and which will be created by the newspaper of the popular class, it is necessary for new leaders to arise – dedicated, capable leaders, ready for the fight. And, above all, we must have an organization that can finance and defend the newspaper.

The forthcoming newspaper of the popular class must be the 'voice of the voiceless men', as Abbé Pierre said of his magazine. Those people who cannot speak in the established press, those movements which see themselves blocked by this established press, those demonstrators who are deformed by the oligarchy in accordance with its own interests and against the interests of the popular class – all those must possess an organ of expression, which should hold the popular class together beyond ideologies, group affiliations, or personalities.

It is most important that the platform be embraced by the different unions. The platform is not against the UTC or against the CTC or against the independent bloc of unions or against any union group. Wherever there are people of the popular class, there are our people. Therefore, we must invite the members of even those groups in which there has been treason among the leaders to join us. To us, the betrayed

popular class is more important than the bad representatives of that class. We are going to accept support from all the union movements and even from those who belong to no union but want to join us in our struggle.

Everybody who belongs to the popular class has the right to a place in our militancy. We also have agrarian unions, peasant leagues, communal action councils, Indian communities. All of them must join our ranks, all must unite around these goals. Our first job, which is very clear, is to create popular unity around our common objectives; therefore, I have insisted that our platform is circulated and explained, not in the ruling class which naturally will have many reservations about it and will call it communistic, as they call everything against the established order communistic, but among the various sectors of the popular class.

We are not going to allow ourselves to be led down the wrong trail by those tricks of the ruling class which are so well known by now. The ruling class has said that I was a Communist while I was still an active priest. Now they are going to say it much more, although I declare that I agree wholeheartedly with the doctrine of the church, that I am still Catholic, and that I will never cease to be a priest 'because when one is ordained one remains a priest forever'. They will go right on calling me a Communist, and they will say the same thing of everybody who circulates this platform even if at the same time that person declares himself Christian and receives Communion every day.

The ruling class calls us Communists because that is the way it defends itself. Everybody defends himself as best he can. The oligarchy is cornered and will stoop to the lowest tactics. Therefore they have begun the war of words. Therefore they have declared a state of siege. Worse things are yet to come. We must be ready for repressions. They are an aggressive minority which cannot advance, which is cornered, which has witnessed the birth of a popular movement against

it, a popular movement which tries to be serious and which is composed of dedicated people, of apostolic people, of people of every social origin. This movement is headed now – I hope not always – by a Catholic priest who as a Catholic and as a priest has joined the revolution.

This is a serious problem for the minority class. They will use everything against me and the others who take part in the movement. They will deal the lowest blows. But we have to accept that as something natural. We must not be dismayed. We must take it for granted.

They are going to call us all Communists, and since we accept the participation of the Communist party they are going to twist that fact and are going to say that the Communist party will take over the movement. If our purpose is to carry out a revolution, we know that it will be taken over by those who have the most popular answers, the most revolutionary answers, by those who display the most courage in the struggle. The ones who take over the movement will take it over because they deserve it. We are going to create a competition to see who is most revolutionary. This will not be a competition to see how we finish each other off; rather, it will show who are the most dedicated leaders, the most able, the most willing to fight, the most responsive to the popular class.

The group that has these leaders will surely dominate the movement. Probably this will not be a single group inside one party but rather leaders of various groups, in which the aligned and the non-aligned, the politicians and those who are not politicians, all try to surpass each other in generosity and dedication, in work for the good of our country. They will firmly support a platform with the characteristics we have mentioned, circulating it, explaining it, getting the rank and file to study it, and hence satisfying the first requirements of every revolution – common awareness among the people and common goals. We must do this rapidly: distribute the platform, explain it, and organize brigades.

That is the second requirement. We must organize brigades. We must rapidly circulate the platform and explain it in order to proceed to the second requirement, which is organization. For our movement not to be demagogic we must understand each concrete issue: we must decide what we want to do about land reform, taxation, oil policy, urban reform, and international relations. We must be a teaching movement. Each member of the movement must be a teacher of the revolution and explain the revolution point by point. You know how groups can get enthusiastic for just a while. For them to retain their enthusiasm they must be taught.

Profound convictions can be acquired in the corner of a tent out in the country, by the light of a candle. People will study the platform, will hear it explained, and will develop an awareness. With people who share these convictions, we will create an indestructible force, united around ideas. When people are united around an idea, they are indestructible.

But unity is not enough in itself. Together with unity, organization is necessary. Until now the Colombian political organizations have been made from top to bottom. Now it is the ruling class, the privileged minority, which imposes the political slogans, chooses the leaders, selects the candidates for elections – all from top to bottom. This has been going on since we won our Independence from Spain in an independence movement managed by *criollos*, the oligarchs of that time. The Revolution of Independence freed us from Spain but did not put an end to the local oligarchy. Therefore the work of Bolívar is unfinished. We stopped being dependent on Spain only to become dependent on the United States. What makes matters worse now is that the ruling class profits from this new dependence and therefore favours it and defends it against the interests of the majority.

A minority continues to rule us through a political organization which controls the popular class. That political organization is made up of two traditional parties, the Liberal

and the Conservative. They are polyclassist parties: they are formed by different classes, from the minority class, at the top, to the popular class, at the bottom. Formerly everybody had to call himself Liberal or Conservative. That was a formula by which the minority controlled the majority. When the division between Liberals and Conservatives no longer corresponded to a difference in political conception, to a difference in economic conditions, when we could no longer distinguish between ourselves as Liberals and Conservatives, then what did political parties mean?

They meant and they now mean that the popular class is divided by sentiment and traditional reasons. A sectarian attitude was deliberately instilled by the rich so that the common people of one party devoted itself to killing the common people of the other party without knowing why. Until now, our violence has been between brothers of the popular class. The ruling class has made use of the violence. The proof is that in all this violence no big heads have rolled. In this sectarian struggle, in this fratricide, the quota of blood has been paid by the popular class.

In these struggles between Liberals and Conservatives the ruling class did not run the risks.

The political parties in Colombia have been instruments to divide the popular class over matters of sentiment and tradition. The political parties have been useful to the ruling class because the greatest threat to that class lies in the popular class organizing itself rationally on common ground. Therefore, the ruling class has trembled at the sight of our platform, because our platform recommends that the popular class be organized not around sentiment and tradition but rather around rational issues through which the whole popular class is against the ruling class.

This, then, is why recommending participation in the elections is contrary to our goals and why elections will keep the people divided. This is true despite the argument that

elections offer an opportunity for the revolution to increase its contacts among the public. To participate in the elections now we would have to align ourselves with one of the two parties. If we were to tell the people to take part in the elections, at the same time that we ask them to unite, our words would be contrary to our deeds. The people would be divided, classified according to affiliation with the traditional parties. We would be inciting the people to vote as Liberal or as Conservative with the result that the ruling class would be able to go on ruling.

We could not erase that fact by telling the people to unite. To invite them to vote would be to divide them. As long as the elections are founded on the two-party system, they should be considered as fundamentally anti-revolutionary. We must understand that from top to bottom this poly-classist political system is one in which the Liberal and Conservative leaders meet and sponsor a series of departmental assemblies, totally prefabricated, which cannot be attended by delegates who oppose the Liberal and Conservative leaders; the only ones who can be elected at these assemblies are those totally submissive to the national leaders. The same thing occurs in the municipal assemblies of the parties. We have a pyramid of control from top to bottom. The minority classes are not alongside the majority but above them. The poly-classist parties appear to divide the minority classes but in fact divide only the majority classes.

The pyramid of control from top to bottom establishes representatives who conform to the order of the political minority which in turn is submissive to the economic ruling class and therefore is an instrument of that economic class in the running of the country. Using the division of traditional political parties, the economic ruling class dominates the popular majorities through political organizations controlled from above.

To mobilize the popular classes so that they can take

power, it is necessary to do the opposite of what the ruling class does.

Many people have tried to tell me that a nucleus should be formed of the elements not aligned in political parties, independents who have wanted to enter this movement, headed by intellectuals, professionals, and other people of great reputation in the country. This nucleus would be the one to direct the campaigns of the United Front. We, we have formed a nucleus. We have formed a nucleus, but it is made up of people who are perhaps not very important according to what is commonly accepted as important by our oligarchy or our established press. This group by no means pretends to represent the majorities, just as I do not presume to represent the majorities. My aspiration – and that of the group which accompanies me – is that we be accepted to serve these majorities, to serve the United Front.

That is the first thing we must do differently from what the ruling classes do. We must not impose leaders upon the majority. We believe that in our manner of organizing the United Front we must be revolutionary. We must change this system of imposing patterns from above. When we organize for action now, we are going to try to do it from the ground up. We are not going to copy the ways of the traditional parties. We are not going to depend on the ruling class which has habitually betrayed the country and the national ideals. We are going to elect leaders, but to do so we must begin by organizing the rank and file. We are going to use the platform in the first step of organizing. Then we are going to use our newspaper. In the campaigns to finance it and circulate it, we will be forming little centres of popular support throughout the rural areas. And these little clusters of supporters will study the platform and will distribute the newspaper. We are going to extend this programme through all our workers' neighbourhoods and into our factories – in every section of every factory, in every school, in every university classroom.

We are going to have people organized to study and circulate the platform and to study and distribute the newspaper.

Then we will say, 'Very well. But is the revolutionary organization going to just pass around some little papers and study a few ideas?' No! What is the organization for? What is our ultimate goal? We must never lose sight of that. If we do, we will also be betraying the kind of movement we are going to establish. What is this organization for? To take over the government. But our first choice in the organization is the picking of our leaders. We can begin with a paternalistic organization, from top to bottom, with an imposed nucleus of leaders who belong to the ruling class, that is, an organization which will be infiltrated by all those bourgeois elements who like the limelight but who later do not work, who like to get attention and later stab the popular movement in the back to prevent it from acting against their group interests. Or we can succeed in getting the leaders to rise from the popular majorities.

Let us say that I am actually representing the bourgeois committee, because the ruling class has seen to it that popular leaders have not developed and because we must wait for good popular leaders to appear. Now we can stop worrying about organizing at the top and focus on the rank and file. When members of the rank and file have developed a common conscience, we will find the best way to organize them further.

As soon as the majorities who make up the United Front have decided how they want to group together internally, the leaders will begin to appear, perhaps by municipalities, by neighbourhoods, by *veredas*, or by factories. This can lead to the selection of representatives by province. From these representatives, elected and controlled by you, elected and controlled by the popular class, we will form a national committee of the United Front.

Then we will be able to say that this is a democratic apparatus and that we are not going to follow the traditional policy

of doing things decided by those at the top. The initiative will come from the membership of the popular class.

When we have this representative organization functioning from the *vereda* level to the national level, when it is a movement with broad popular support, united and disciplined, then we will indeed take over the government, because we will be able to control the elections. Otherwise, we will take recourse to some other means. But we will take over the government.

It has been said many times by the ruling class that I preach violent revolution. It is interesting to see why. You all know what my assertions boil down to: the majority should rule, and governmental decisions should favour the majority rather than the minority. As we all know, this will not be easy to achieve. I have said that we should prepare ourselves in case the minority uses violence to try to prevent the majority classes from ruling. Nevertheless, you see that the established press and even the ecclesiastical hierarchy have reacted by condemning me, supposedly because I am defending violent revolution.

What is really happening is that the members of the ruling class know that they are the ones who will determine whether the revolution will be peaceful or violent. The decision is not in the hands of the popular class but in the hands of the ruling class. Since the popular class is beginning to organize with courage, discipline, and resolution, and since we are not organizing for elections, the ruling class says that we are organizing for violent revolution. This shows, then, that the minority, the ruling class, intends to unleash violence against the majority. It shows that the ruling class is going to use violence to oppose the just reforms which the majority popular class demands.

Violence is carried out with guns, grenades, and tanks — with large quantities of expensive items not at the disposal of the popular class. Therefore, the ones who use violence are

the ones who can afford it. A peasant will not sell a cow that gives milk to his children to buy a machine gun, except in the extreme case when somebody is going to kill him and his children with another machine gun. So if the peasant arms himself, why does he do it? Against whom is he going to defend himself?

We are now organizing ourselves around a few common ideas. We are forming a great popular movement. We are going towards the seizure of power. The ruling class is behaving like Pharisees. They are hypocrites. After they have used violence, they have no right to accuse the majority of wanting to use violence, especially when the majority has been suffering violence for sixteen years and sincerely does not want it to begin again. We must expose these things to all Colombians and show them why we have decided to fight to the end, never retreating a step backward. The enemy, from what it has shown, has made up its mind to fight to the finish, and if we do not also we will be in a position of inferiority. So we will go right on until we take over the government. For the minority class to deny us the right to take over the government would be fundamentally anti-democratic. If we are a majority and if we believe in democracy we deserve power. If the struggle goes so far as to blaspheme Colombian democracy by their use of violence, the ruling classes must understand that we are ready to answer force with force.

We represent the popular class – or want to. We want to form a unity movement. We need to define our attitude about violence. Our answer to all the questions put to us must be stated very clearly: No, we do not want violence. We do not want to use force. But we do want majority rule. Therefore, if we are asked if this movement is democratic, we answer: It is essentially democratic, because democracy does not consist of setting up an electoral machine or of staging an electoral farce to give power to the minorities. Democracy consists of organized majorities able to govern.

We are going to dedicate ourselves to this work. We ourselves must do it. When we leave these meetings, each of us has a mission. Each of us must take a copy of the platform and get together with his friends and family, with the people with whom he works, with his neighbours, to study it, to circulate it. Each of us must try to do this. Later, these groups will distribute our newspaper and then we will begin to look for representatives from the ground up, and we will constitute a popular organization on the move, advancing rapidly. We will know how to transform slogans into deeds. For example, when our organization advises people to abstain from voting, it must explain that we are staying away from the polls because we refuse to play the game of the enemy. We are not going to vote because we are not going to collaborate in dividing the people into Liberals and Conservatives. We believe that this division is a division of the popular class, an irrational division of the majority interests. We are not going to collaborate in that.

We will obtain an active abstention. The people will rise up to 'No' once again. The people will, as a single man, show this régime that we are superior to our rulers, that we are able to act collectively to save our country, to lift it out of the morass generated by the ruling class.

28. Why I Am Not Participating in the Elections*

The platform of the United Front of the Colombian People has no position on the electoral struggle as a revolutionary tactic. To bring about the union of revolutionaries, we must insist on anything that will unite us and avoid anything that

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will separate us. If the electoral problem is an obstacle to this union, it is better not to undertake it, especially when we are still not sure that the elections will take place.

If I were interested in the elections, the most logical thing to do would be to present a slate and enter myself as a candidate. In my opinion this would be to form a new group which would even further divide the opposition. This attitude would hinder me from accomplishing the resolved task of uniting the Colombian popular class.

I do not consider myself the representative of the Colombian popular class, the head of the United Front, or the leader of the Colombian revolution, because I was not elected by the people. I want to be accepted by them as a servant of the revolution.

While the United Front is still choosing its leaders, I am not its leader, except in those cases where the members so determine. Since I am not going to participate in the elections, I must explain the motives that led me to this decision. Besides the reason given earlier (that of not dividing the opposition further), there are the following :

1. Under the present voting system, the Colombian people must choose between Liberal and Conservative. Anything which divides the people is against their interests.

2. The electoral apparatus is in the hands of the oligarchy, and, for this reason, 'who counts votes, elects'. The elections are determined more in the offices of the oligarchical government than in the voting booths.

3. Since it is impossible to beat those who control the electoral machinery and all the elements of power, the opposition groups who get into parliament will never bring about revolutionary changes. On the contrary, their presence in parliament makes it easier for the oligarchy to say that in Colombia there is democracy because there is opposition.

4. It does not seem to me to be good revolutionary education to tell the people to distrust the oligarchy, on the one

hand, and, on the other hand, to act to hand over to the system something as precious to a man as his political opinion.

5. I think that the time and money spent drawing up a slate and discussing revenues, supplements, and leaders could be used to organize and unify the popular class at the bottom.

6. Should the miracle ever happen that the oligarchy makes a mistake in counting the ballots and the opposition became the majority (for example, in the case of a new plebiscite), we know that, as in the triumph of Peronism in Argentina, the oligarchy could annul the elections and stage a coup. An oligarchy which has no qualms about murdering revolutionary leaders, throwing the country into violence, and supporting a military régime is not going to hand over power merely because the opposition has won a majority of votes. And as we have already shown, it is virtually impossible to win such a majority.

Personally, I am in favour not of passive electoral abstention but of active, aggressive, revolutionary abstention. Abstention is active because it will be the manifestation of a rejection of the system, including the elections as a cog in that system; for this, one must be politically motivated. Abstention is aggressive because the revolutionary commands will receive precise assignments on how to behave at the elections. Abstention is revolutionary because it will be used to unify and organize the popular class for a definitive assault on power.

29. Message to Christians*

The convulsions caused by the political, religious, and social events of recent times may have sown a great deal of confusion among Colombian Christians. At this decisive moment

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in our history, we Christians must take a firm stand on the essential bases of our religion.

In Catholicism the main thing is love for one's fellow man: '... he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the Law' (Romans xiii, 8). For this love to be genuine, it must seek to be effective. If beneficence, alms, the few tuition-free schools, the few housing projects – in general, what is known as 'charity' – do not succeed in feeding the hungry majority, clothing the naked, or teaching the unschooled masses, we must seek effective means to achieve the well-being of these majorities. These means will not be sought by the privileged minorities who hold power, because such effective means generally force the minorities to sacrifice their privileges. For example, employment could be increased by investing the capital now leaving Colombia in dollars in the creation of new job opportunities here in the country. But, due to the virtually daily devaluation of the Colombian peso, those with money and power are never going to prohibit currency exportation, because it frees them from devaluation.

Thus, power must be taken from the privileged minorities and given to the poor majorities. If this is done rapidly, it constitutes the essential characteristic of a revolution. The revolution can be a peaceful one if the minorities refrain from violent resistance. Revolution is, therefore, the way to obtain a government that will feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and teach the unschooled. Revolution will produce a government that carries out works of charity, of love for one's fellows – not for only a few but for the majority of our fellow men. This is why the revolution is not only permissible but obligatory for those Christians who see it as the only effective and far-reaching way to make the love of all people a reality. It is true that 'there exists no authority except from God' (Romans xiii, 1). But St Thomas teaches that it is the people who concretely have the right to authority.

When the existing authority is against the people, it is not

legitimate, and we call it a tyranny. We Christians can and must fight against tyranny. The present government is tyrannical because it receives the support of only 20 per cent of the voters and because its decisions emanate from the privileged minorities.

The temporal defects of the church must not shock us. The church is human. The important thing is to believe that it is also divine and that if we Christians fulfil our obligation to love our fellow man, we are thereby strengthening the church.

I have given up the duties and privileges of the clergy, but I have not ceased to be a priest. I believe that I have given myself to the revolution out of love for my fellow man. I have ceased to say Mass to practise love for my fellow man in the temporal, economic, and social spheres. When my fellow man has nothing against me, when he has carried out the revolution, then I will return to offering Mass, God permitting. I think that in this way I follow Christ's injunction: 'Therefore, if thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother has anything against thee, leave thy gift before the altar and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift' (Matthew v, 23-4). After the revolution we Colombians will be aware that we are establishing a system oriented towards the love of our neighbour. The struggle is long; let us begin now.

30. Message to Communists*

The relations that have traditionally existed between Christians and Marxists, between the church and the Communist party, may give rise to doubts and misunderstandings about the relations taking shape within the United Front between Christians and Marxists and between a priest and the Com-

* [Published in *Frente Unido*, 2 September 1965. - Ed.]

munist party. I therefore consider it necessary to make clear to the Colombian people both my relations with the Communist party and its position in the United Front.

I have said that as a Colombian, as a sociologist, as a Christian, and as a priest I am a revolutionary. I believe that the Communist party consists of truly revolutionary elements, and hence I cannot be an anti-Communist either as a Colombian, a sociologist, a Christian, or a priest.

As a Colombian I am not an anti-Communist because anti-Communism hounds nonconformists among my compatriots regardless of whether they are Communists or not. Most of them are simply poor people. As a sociologist I am not an anti-Communist because the Communist theses concerning the fight against poverty, hunger, illiteracy, lack of shelter, and absence of public services offer effective scientific solutions to these problems. As a Christian I am not an anti-Communist because I believe that anti-Communism implies condemnation of everything that Communists stand for.

As a priest I am not an anti-Communist because among the Communists themselves, whether they know it or not, there may be many true Christians. If they are of good faith, they are entitled to receive Holy Communion. And if they receive Holy Communion and if they love their neighbour, they will be saved. My duty as a priest, although I no longer practise the rites of the church, is to bring people nearer to God, and the best way to do this is to try to make people serve their neighbour according to the dictates of their conscience. I do not seek to proselytize my Communist brethren and induce them to accept the dogma and the rites of the church. What I strive for is that people should act according to their conscience, that they should sincerely search for the truth, and that they should truly love their fellow men.

I am prepared to fight together with the Communists for our common goals: against the oligarchy and United States domination; for the winning of power by the people.

I do not want to be identified with the Communists alone and, hence, I have always sought to work together not only with them but with all independent revolutionaries and revolutionaries of other convictions.

That the large newspapers persist in saying that I am a Communist is of no importance. I prefer to follow the voice of my own conscience and not to submit to pressures from the oligarchy. I prefer to live according to the standards of the apostles of the church and not the standards of the apostles of our ruling class. John XXIII allowed me to join in united actions with the Communists when he declared the following in his encyclical *Pacem in terris* :

It must be borne in mind, furthermore, that neither can false philosophical teachings regarding the nature, origin, and destiny of the universe and of man be identified with historical movements that have economic, social, cultural, or political ends, not even when these movements have originated from those teachings and have drawn and still draw inspiration therefrom. Because the teachings, once they are drawn up and defined, remain always the same, while the movements, working on historical situations in constant evolution, cannot but be influenced by these latter and cannot avoid, therefore, being subject to changes, even of a profound nature. Besides, who can deny that these movements, in so far as they conform to the dictates of right reason and are interpreters of the lawful aspirations of the human person, contain elements that are positive and deserving of approval?

It can happen, then, that a drawing nearer together or a meeting for the attainment of some practical end, which was formerly deemed inopportune or unproductive, might now or in the future be considered opportune and useful. But to decide whether this moment has arrived, and also to lay down the ways and degrees in which work in common might be possible for the achievement of economic, social, cultural, and political ends, which are honourable and useful: these are the problems which can only be solved with the virtue of prudence, which is the guiding light

of the virtues that regulate the moral life, both individual and social.

When the people take power into their hands, thanks to the cooperation of all revolutionaries, the nation will consider the question of its religious orientation. The example of Poland shows that it is possible to build socialism without destroying that which is basic in Christianity. One Polish priest clarifies this: 'We Christians are duty-bound to help build the socialist state when we are permitted to worship God as we wish.'

31. Assignments*

Let us consider as the principal objective of the revolutionary struggle the union and the organization of the Colombian popular class in order to take power.

Let us found this union in the spirit and along the general lines of the platform of the United Front of the People.

Let us sponsor a popular organization developed from the bottom up: from neighbourhood to town, from suburb to centre, from countryside to city. To do this, the Colombian popular class must be organized into groups of five or ten, with no distinction between partisan or opposition movements and the non-aligned in these groups and movements, with the sole condition that they accept the general lines of the platform of the United Front of the People.

The first assignment for these commands of the United Front will be the discussion and dissemination of the platform. This platform has not been given to the Colombians as dogma or as a definitive programme. It is a proposal to be examined by the Colombian popular class, so that they may

* [Published in *Frente Unido*, 2 September 1965. – Ed.]

discuss it, change it, and amplify it, since it is to be applied when this class takes power.

The second assignment is to disseminate the platform through every medium: to send it out printed, mimeographed, typewritten, handwritten; to read it to illiterate compatriots; to shout it in the fields and streets of Colombia.

The third assignment is to organize the distribution and financing of the newspaper *Frente Unido*. The oligarchy will not support a publication which is destined to clash with it. In a revolutionary newspaper the numerous small contributions of the poor are more important than the suspect and adulterated donations of the rich. The newspaper costs one peso – a peso a week for the revolution, something less than the cost of a beer. This cost will be put towards not only the financing of the newspaper but also the support of the minimum political apparatus necessary to take power for the popular class. The *Frente Unido* will be the thread which unifies the popular commands and creates a large network supporting the entire organization of the working and farming classes.

The fourth assignment will be the election of command leaders and the formation of farm commands, factory commands, neighbourhood commands, and district, municipal, and departmental commands, so that at the end of the year we can call a large popular convention in Bogotá to elect a national command of the revolution and determine the tactics to be followed in the definitive assault for power. The most powerful, the richest, the best educated, the better families, the local bosses, and traditional leaders need not attend this convention. Those who do attend will be the weak, the ignorant, the imprudent – according to the oligarchy – the poor, the hungry, the ill-clothed, but the ones who hold the ideals of the revolution and have the flame of struggle for their brothers in their hearts and in their arms.

The municipal, regional, and departmental commands

which will be elected will be provisional commands. All Colombians, without discrimination, will participate in them. They may be representatives of worker, farmer, or student societies, or they may be from among the non-aligned. In the provisional commands of the United Front, no one will be judged by what he represents but by what he does for the revolution. For now, effectiveness in the organization will be proved with assignments emanating from the provisional committee which functions at the national level. When the national command of the United Front is established, as a result of the Bogotá convention, it will give the revolutionary assignments and determine the tactical steps towards the takeover of power by the popular class.

The takeover may be sudden or progressive. It all depends on the unity and organization of the popular class, on the one hand, and on the belligerent attitude of the oligarchy on the other. The popular class has not decided on the way to take power; it has decided that it has to be taken sooner or later. It is the oligarchy which must decide how the power is going to be given over. If it is given over peacefully, the popular class will take it peacefully. If they do not want to give it up without a struggle, the popular class will take it with a struggle.

For the union of the popular class, unto death.

For the organization of the popular class, unto death.

For the takeover of power for the popular class, unto death.

32. Message to the Military*

After having seen the power of forty armed and disciplined men over a crowd of 4,000 in the city of Girardot, I decided to make a fervent call to the armed forces of Colombia to

* [Published in *Frente Unido*, 9 September 1965. – Ed.]

become aware of the historic moment in which we are living and to decide for themselves now how they will participate in the revolutionary struggle.

On various occasions I have seen uniformed men – farmers and workers, never elements of the ruling class – fighting and persecuting farmers, workers, and students who represent the majority of Colombians. And it is with rare exception that I have found members of the oligarchy among the officials and sub-officials. Anyone who considers the contrast between the Colombian majorities clamouring for revolution and the small military minorities repressing the people in order to protect a few small privileged families must ask himself what reasons induce these elements of the people to persecute their fellows.

It could not be for the economic advantages. All military personnel are poorly paid. The military are generally not permitted to study for a life outside the army. When they reach higher rank, they try to buy a corner house to open a store to support them in their retirement. I have seen generals and colonels apply for posts as teachers of physical education in high school and as insurance salesmen. The salary for personnel on active duty is low, but it is even lower for retired personnel. They receive no medical attention or any other economic benefits. However, we know that a third of our national budget goes to the armed forces. As is obvious, the war budget is not used to pay the Colombian military but to buy the scrap metal the United States sells us, to maintain the material elements, and to support internal repression in which Colombians kill their own brothers.

It may be that the motive behind what the military does is devotion to the fatherland, the Constitution, and the laws. But the Colombian fatherland consists mainly in its men, and the majority of these are suffering and cut off from power. The Constitution is constantly violated in that jobs, property, freedom, and participation in power are not given

to the people who ought to be, according to the Constitution, the ones to decide public policy in the country. The Constitution is violated when martial law is maintained after the causes that were the pretext for its declaration have ceased. The laws are violated when citizens are detained without a warrant for arrest, when the mail is withheld, when curfews are imposed, when the telephones are tapped, and when lies and tricks are used to persecute revolutionaries.

Perhaps it is necessary better to inform the military about the fatherland, the Constitution, and the laws, so that they do not think that the fatherland consists in the twenty-four families whom they actually protect, for whom they spill their blood, and from whom they receive such poor remuneration.

Perhaps the principal reason that the military continues to be the armed extension of the oligarchy is the lack of opportunity in other fields of human activity which exists in Colombia. The military should understand that when the revolution triumphs, the economy will be planned; schools, colleges, and universities will be open to all Colombians; and not only they but their sons too will have the opportunity for remunerative employment and unrestricted careers. While the revolution lasts, the reactionary enemy will face an army, not for the defence of the privileged minorities but for the defence of the people. The sacrifices made then will be made to develop the fatherland, not to destroy it.

The honour of the army will not then be stained by the caprice of the oligarchy and of their lackeys who have the armed forces at their service. We will no longer see three-star generals made destitute for having talked of structural reform and pressure groups. We will no longer see generals from the middle class accused of being contrabandists in public scandals, while their superiors in the upper class or connected with the Colombian oligarchy engage in contraband activities which they manage to keep secret, activities

which are more directly detrimental to the interests of the country and national sovereignty.

Military men: the United Front promises you to unify the popular class and to organize them to take power. Do not fail to join us on the field of battle where we will strike a fatal blow against this oligarchy that oppresses all Colombians, that oppresses you as it oppresses us.

33. Message to the Non-Aligned*

The symptoms of laxity and putrefaction in the National Front are common to those of all degenerating régimes in the final stages of their existence. The leaders drown, in parties and orgies, the unrest that popular ferment produces in them and devote their political activity to caucuses and internal struggles among anachronistic and unpopular politicians. The disputes among the Llerases, the Gomezes, the Ospinases, and other families of our feudal aristocracy no longer interest the people. The people are hungry. They are dissatisfied. They have decided to unite and organize themselves. The people above all have made the unswerving decision to take power.

In past elections there was still no need for the oligarchy to invent votes; if we permit the next elections to take place, then they will certainly have to invent many votes. The abstentionists constitute the majority of the electorate. Seventy per cent of the Colombians did not go to the polls. Anyone having an elemental knowledge of the Colombian people, anyone who has attended the popular meetings with me, must have come to the conclusion that the abstentionists are opposed to the National Front and the oligarchy.

In general, those who abstain are those revolutionaries

* [Published in *Frente Unido*, 16 September 1965. - Ed.]

who are not organized into political groups. The revolutionary and anti-partisan spirit that the political groups which have entered the United Front have shown has allowed them to obtain a greater number of adherents. Most Colombians have joined the United Front without joining the already existent political groups. These groups have to understand that the principal activity of the United Front ought to be the organization of the non-aligned.

The non-aligned must be organized from the bottom up, with its own leaders and a strong but non-dictatorial authority. At present, the main link between them is the platform of the United Front of the People which I have presented as a proposal to the Colombian popular class. It is possible that my name still holds too much importance in this group. At an initial stage, while my name serves to stimulate agitation and revolutionary organization, it can be quite useful. It would be infantile to repeat the same mistakes that produced the calamities of earlier revolutionary movements. We have already seen how the oligarchy assassinated Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. We have already seen how the reaction of the people at this moment was not to regroup themselves around the revolutionary leaders but to run to the leaders of the oligarchy, who arrived at the presidential palace on the shoulders of the people to betray the revolutionary movement. We have already seen how these disorganized people wanted to fight in the cities, where the enemy is stronger. We have already seen how the people allowed themselves to become disconcerted and began burning and looting instead of retreating to the countryside, where the enemy is weaker and where the revolutionaries have greater resources.

We are running a race with the oligarchy. It is possible that they will assassinate me before a solid organization of the non-aligned can be formed. I think it would be too slow for them to jail me or invent a propaganda trial. So I think assassination is more likely. What is important is that the

Colombian people have precise assignments should this happen.

The first is to retreat to the country, not to fight in the city. The second is to take no offensive action as long as there is no rural organization capable of maintaining it. It is also necessary for the non-aligned to take note of the seriousness of this moment and of their historical responsibility. Each minute that we lose in organization is a minute's advantage for the oligarchy.

The many demonstrations, the enthusiasm, and the revolutionary agitation are useful in so far as they reflect immediately upon a grass-roots organization. It is necessary for each simple farmer, each common worker, and each revolutionary to feel responsible for forming a command of the United Front with a few co-workers or friends, without waiting for directives and without awaiting orders. They must unite to do the following: (1) to discuss and disseminate the platform of the United Front; (2) to distribute and finance the newspaper *Frente Unido*; (3) to carry out the immediate assignments of operations; (4) to coordinate with the other basic commands in order to form commands on the factory, college or university, neighbourhood, district, municipal, regional, and departmental levels; (5) to prepare the delegates for the people's national convention, to be held on the eleventh or twelfth of December 1965.

The demonstration on October tenth, at five o'clock, in the Plaza de Bolívar will be the occasion for the non-aligned to present themselves in organized commands and societies. In this demonstration the Colombian people, especially those from the capital, will protest against the state of martial law and all of its repressive consequences against the Colombian people: the persecution of union, the persecution of the leaders of the opposition, the new taxes, the latest devaluation, and so forth.

Electoral abstention alone is not a weapon of revolu-

tionary combat. It must be led by an organization and by an aggressive and active discipline. The non-aligned, the non-partisan revolutionaries, will have to transform themselves from a weak, amorphous mass into a battering ram that will not stop battering at the system until the system has totally crumbled.

34. Join the Workers*

I know that unfortunately this nonconformity at times is too sentimental or is produced by frustration; it is seldom a rational nonconformity. Therefore, it is important that, during the period of studies, the nonconformity become more and more rational, based on research, on science adapted to reality, and on immediate contact with the Colombian reality.

Despite the fact that in some circumstances we do have reasonable nonconformists and nonconformists in the scientific and technological sphere, we see nonconformity beginning to decay during the last years at the university, when the prospect of being inserted into the social structure enters the student's mental horizon. Then the various needs appear: the need for a patron to open up the way for his entrance into the professional market; the needs for a good recommendation, a good friendship, a bourgeois reputation. We often observe, then, that nonconformity ends with the diploma. This is because neither a true commitment nor an authentically revolutionary mentality has existed in the student body.

I realize that, in general, the students react against the bourgeoisie. But that reaction is neither scientific nor revo-

* [Transcribed sections from lecture delivered at INNCA University of Colombia, 21 September 1965. - Ed.]

lutionary but only formal, external, and superficial. The spirit of reaction against the bourgeoisie leads them to reject its symbols of prestige: they read different works from those which the bourgeoisie read; they dress differently; they even stop cutting their hair and bathing so as not to look like the bourgeoisie in any respect. I do not think that those things are evil in themselves or prejudicial or opposed to the revolution. But what is serious is that so often the nonconformist who has dressed like the proletariat arrives at the end of his studies harbouring in his mind and imagination the ideal of a professional bourgeois, with a magnificent apartment and automobile and with an advantageous marriage. Being well-married means finding a woman who has a sufficient income. As all this requires money, an adequate salary is needed, and it is then that he opts for the solution of selling out to the oligarchy, since the larger monetary rewards depend, in general, on the oligarchy. The desire for revolution terminates here.

To be a revolutionary, one must be ready to suffer hunger and imprisonment, to descend from one's own social status, to live with the worker, and, if necessary, to take long trips and live poorly. For all this, a much more fundamental, much more definite, decision is needed; therefore, it is important that the students begin to be complete revolutionaries with a total dedication.

It is possible that what the present moment of the country demands of many young revolutionaries is that they abandon their studies and place themselves at the head of the revolution. But it is also possible that for many this is not required, because of special circumstances or some temperamental factor. This is not so serious because the revolution will need more technologists than those the oligarchy now needs.

The important thing is the immediate and concrete commitment to the people. I would like to know how many students in Bogotá or in Colombia live with the workers;

how many dedicate their vacations to making contact with the common people; how many make an effort to translate into practice what they preach as revolutionaries. In other words, how concerned are the students about understanding the common people? The fact is that in the revolutionary life, going to the common people represents an ascent; therefore, a person must go to them without the paternalism which characterizes the bourgeoisie. Those of us who are of bourgeois extraction will learn more than we will teach, since the poor will reveal to us the misery of Colombia, the oppression in Colombia, the persecution of the workers of Colombia, and the common language. If this last were determined by a majority of votes, it would not be the language of the Academy of Languages but the harsh speech of the workers; and it is that language which we must learn and interpret, not only in its exterior forms but in its intimate internal nuances.

We will mingle with the people in that plan, by committing ourselves to them to the point that if, having made our decision, we begin to fall behind, they are the ones who will oppose us and strengthen our resolution. Our commitment in the battle demands that we use all our forces for the unification and organization of the lower class until we achieve the final goal, which cannot be other than the seizure of power by the people, cost what it may.

I believe that the historical moment which is now being lived in Colombia demands of us much more serious reflection on the consequences of our generosity or reserve, our dedication or indifference, our decision or ambivalence, our activity or our passivity.

I think that, at this time, every minute we lose from our task of unifying the lower class, organizing the lower class for the seizure of power, is a minute we are giving to the oligarchy. Would that each Colombian university student might have deeply implanted in his conscience the mission

which providence or destiny bestows today on the university students of America: to light the spark of the revolution and apply it where it should be. But that spark cannot be lit except in the lower class. We know that this class will demand more of us each day. We must go further forward each day, because the lower class, which supports our every activity, demands this of us.

Therefore, I want to launch now, as the slogan for the Colombian students and for the revolutionaries of our country and of all of Latin America, the flaming words of Gaitán: 'Forward! Not one step back! And whatever must be, let it be.'

35. Message to the Trade Unions*

Few groups in Colombia have such a tradition of struggle and organization as do the workers, the urban labourers. In spite of the fact that the industrialization of Colombia did not become important nationally until 1939, Colombian unionism, both rural and urban, has a tradition of struggle dating back before this time. The riots of the banana workers are evidence of this struggle. The government of Alfonso López marked an important stage in labour organization and in the Colombian union struggle. Unionism surged as an aggressive and independent force, but soon, under reactionary governments, it began to pall because of its paternalistic and imperialistic elements and because of strike breakers selling out to the government. Our ruling class has succeeded in dividing the working class, and, after debilitating it on religious and political pretexts – as it had already weakened the popular class – it resolved at the Cartagena Congress to purge it of Communist elements, in other words,

* [Published in *Frente Unido*, 23 September 1965. – Ed.]

to remove all elements not submitting to national and North American patronage.

However, the pressure of the system was common to all workers. Gaitán's movement consolidated a class consciousness that official violence has not been able to blot out in the nineteen years it has been in existence. The mercenary leaders, selling out to the oligarchy, behave more impudently each time and have to use more and more arbitrary and violent measures to maintain power.

The National Front is accelerating the social struggle in Colombia by instituting itself as the first class party in Colombia, a party of the privileged class which consolidates the union of oppressors against the oppressed, challenging the Colombian popular class to constitute, according to the advice of José Antonio Galán, 'the union of the oppressed against the oppressors'.

The government of the National Front brought about three devaluations, increased by 200 per cent public and war expenditures, and tried to repair the serious fiscal failure by imposing on the Colombian people a sales tax, a gasoline tax, and a 'pound cake tax'. The national walkout of January twenty-fifth was the culmination of a social ferment which was sold out to the oligarchy so that they could make a pound cake which they themselves would have to eat. However, the system is so disintegrated and corrupt that the parliamentary political machine did not function either for the pound cake or extraordinary power.

Then dictatorship was re-established. They availed themselves of a student strike to declare martial law, which is still in effect – contrary to the Constitution – to legislate on economic matters, and to bring about labour demagoguery. The most serious thing about the present system is that not only are the workers discontent but the oligarchy is as well, and I say most serious because when the oligarchy is discontent, the possibility of a coup becomes more immediate.

When political equipment fails, the oligarchy turns to military equipment. The military government which is now in power may possibly awaken hopes through demagogic measures. Lately, our people have unanimously cried for revolution. However, we still lack sufficient consciousness and adequate organization to oppose the deceit that will predominate the demagogic measures after the fall of the hated government of the National Front.

An interminable series of legal and illegal strikes have been begun in our country. All these struggles or successes strengthen the revolutionary movement because they unify, organize, and consolidate the consciousness of the Colombian working class. The members of all the union locals are unified, together with many of their leaders, around the platform of the United Front of the People. The workers, together with the students, constitute the bastion capable of opposing the new forms of deceit that the oligarchy will adopt. Above all, it is necessary that the workers decide to use their relative financial capability and their unquestionable organizational capability in the revolutionary struggle and in the organization of the rest of the Colombian popular class.

It has been said that the unionists are the oligarchy of the popular class. I do not think so. Because of the exploitive attitude of the oligarchy, even those union men (many of them at least) who work in monopolistic businesses, and therefore benefit from a number of the privileges which these businesses have, adopted a frankly revanchist and revolutionary attitude.

The Colombian working class must, in these crucial moments of our history, dedicate their efforts towards the unity and organization of the Colombian popular class in order to take power. Through each struggle for immediate advantage the people must not lose sight of the fact that the total and definitive labour recovery will only come as a result of the taking of power by the majorities, the Colombian

popular classes. The unity, organization, and struggle for this definitive recovery depend on the unity, organization, and capacity to fight for present recovery. The union leaders who are afraid of the dissemination of the platform of the United Front are the ones who fear unity because they know that a united and organized working class would rigorously collect whatever they have paid to the national and foreign ruling classes.

The working class, like the Colombian people, has in many cases been superior to its leaders. When the working class unites from below, it will constitute the pressure necessary for the Colombian people to oust the leaders who do not want union or revolution, and the Colombian people will sweep out the oligarchy like a torrent.

36. Father Torres Speaks*

The Cardinal reduced me to the lay state by a decree in which he says that this reduction will be in accord with an order from Rome. This order has not arrived, for they told me that they asked the Cardinal to speak with me before imposing laical sanction on me and he did not heed this order.

Unfortunately, the Cardinal gives the impression of continuing in the same key: he neither explains nor proves in what way I am opposed to the Catholic church. It seems that he is acting under pressure from the groups which have subjugated the country.

The public statements of his Eminence the Cardinal

* [Response to a reporter's question following a declaration by Luís Cardinal Concho Córdoba censuring Torres, his thesis, and his United Front and stating that Torres could not return to the priesthood; published in *Frente Unido*, 30 September 1965. — Ed.]

contradict his private statements. When I spoke with him personally, we saw that the only way to keep our consciences clear was for me to ask for a reduction to lay status. He told me that it was a painful decision for him but that he hoped that, when I considered it convenient, I would return to the exercise of my priesthood and that he would receive me with open arms.

37. Message to the Peasants*

According to the census, the rural population has decreased. However, the census considers urban any area with more than 1,500 inhabitants. In reality this is not so. We can say that the majority of the Colombian population is rural.

Besides numbers, the most important fact is that the rural Colombians contribute the most to the national income. Ninety per cent of the exports are agricultural (coffee, bananas, tobacco, sugar). Without agriculture we would not be able to import the machines or the food we lack. Unfortunately, as with everything else in this system, the contribution of the peasants benefits only a few. The profits are concentrated in the hands of those who run the associations (coffee producers, cotton growers, United Fruit, banana growers, and tobacco growers) and the banks (especially the Bank of the Republic). The portion of the profits which the government receives is used in so-called operating costs, that is, paying employees (whose numbers have been doubled because of the duplication needed to preserve parity of the parties in governmental administration) and purchasing old arms to kill the peasants who have made the money that purchases them.

The contrast between the economic and social importance

* [Published in *Frente Unido*, 7 October 1965. - Ed.]

of the peasants and the treatment they receive is clearly scandalous. *La violencia* has been principally rural. It is the government that began it in 1947, first using the police and then, since 1948, using the army.

The Liberal oligarchy paid the Liberal peasants, and the Conservative oligarchy paid the Conservative peasants, for the peasants to kill their own people. The oligarchy came out with a scratch. And when the oligarchy no longer needed them, they declared them bandits, had them hunted down like wild beasts, and then published the photographs of their bodies on the front page of the newspaper, boasting of their triumph in the name of peace, justice, and legality.

This governmental violence, financed by the oligarchy, later taught the peasants many things. It taught them to recognize their true enemy in the oligarchy. It taught them to run first and defend themselves later. It taught them to attack to obtain what the oligarchy obtained through violence – farms, crops, livestock, and power. The system did not give them these things. On the contrary, the peasants have the lowest salaries, the fewest schools, the worst housing, and the fewest possibilities for progress in the country.

When they had killed the known ringleaders, the governmental forces burned the areas controlled by these peasants. Although the United States advised a cutback, the leaders of the Colombian government claimed that they could not allow ‘suspect’ areas to be left unwatched, even though they may have been peaceful. The army had to increase its importance to show that its existence was necessary and thereby to increase its budget.

The government says that the peasants started *la violencia*. The peasants say it was the government. In France intellectuals of every leaning, after their investigations, say that the peasants are right. I wish to challenge the government to request, if it dares, a United Nations investigatory commission, made up of neutral countries (for example, Egypt, India,

and Chile), to judge the cases of Marquetalia, Pato, Guayaquero, and Río Chiquito.

We see that the landings of the Colombian army, led by the United States' military mission in the 'independent republics', are the image of the Marines landing in Santo Domingo. The landings will continue. Yesterday in Río Chiquito, tomorrow in Suma Paz, the day after tomorrow in the Ariari and the Llanos. The army begins with civic-military action and ends with bombardments; it begins by showing its teeth and ends by shooting bullets. The peasants now know that the army carries bread in its outstretched hand and a dagger in the hand held behind its back. The dependent republic of Colombia will continue to obey the Americans in order to destroy by blood and fire the other republics of independent Colombians. The American cabinet has so decreed. Our peasants know on what to rely. They now know what to prepare for. They do not rush into danger, but they also do not run away from the struggle.

Now the oligarchy, under martial law, has removed people from the public squares. It pursues them with machine guns even in closed districts, such as Medellín. When they make life impossible for us in the city, we must go to the country. And from the country we cannot cast ourselves into the sea. There we will have to resist. The peasants ought to prepare themselves for this by organizing the commandos of the United Front into groups of five or ten, by ridding the area of traitors to the people's cause, by preparing caches of food and clothing, and by readying for a prolonged struggle, stopping neither to provoke nor offer resistance when conditions are unfavourable to the people.

The oligarchy will continue to reaffirm the peasants in their conviction that they must support the revolutionary forces. Why have they not killed the guerrilla from Simacota? They would have, if not for the support of the peasants. When the oligarchy leaves no other route, the peasants

will have to give refuge to the urban revolutionaries, to the workers and students. For the moment you must unify and organize yourselves to prepare to undertake the final great struggle.

38. Organizing the Non-Aligned*

The grass-roots union of the popular class is a simple matter. The hungry, the unemployed, the insecure, the poor, and the uneducated identify themselves easily with our concrete political objectives and especially with the main objective, the seizing of power for the Colombian popular class.

The organization of the popular class has come about much more easily and quickly than it was thought. The organizational precedents left by the union, the cooperative, and communal action have helped. But the basic thing is the desire of the people to organize themselves. 'Necessity is the mother of invention.' The people have realized that organization is the basis of the revolutionary movement. For this reason they have succeeded in overcoming the feelings of inferiority, timidity, and apathy. The farmers and workers have begun to feel directly responsible for the revolution and have therefore begun, without awaiting orders from above, to organize themselves into groups of three, five, ten, or more.

The organization of the grass roots is a fact, more and more of a fact each day. Among the leaders and intellectuals it is a different story. They are being cautious and thoughtful. But fortunately, while the revolutionary intellectuals are cudgelling their brains seeking the exact formula for the Colombian Revolution on the shelves of the libraries, the people have found this formula through their suffering and

* [Published in *Frente Unido*, 7 October 1965. - Ed.]

their awareness of being exploited, persecuted, and humiliated.

The United Front of the People is composed of the organized political movements that have approved the platform for struggle and of all Colombians – Liberals, Conservatives, the ANAPO, Lopezes, the MRL, Hard-Liners, Communists (expelled or not, organized or not), Christian Democrats, Nationalists, Independents, and so forth – who approve of this platform. We need to unite the oppressed against the oppressors. But in Colombia the majority of the oppressed do not belong to organized political groups. They are the non-aligned, who, on the whole, want the revolution but are not organized for it.

What, then, is the principle duty of the revolutionaries who are more conscientious, more organized, and more aligned, not so on behalf of their group but on behalf of the Colombian revolution? It is to organize the non-aligned, to make them align themselves. And this must be the primary concern of the United Front. Is it necessary for them to become Christian Democrats, Communists, Emerrelists, or members of the ANAPO? Is not the main objective to have them align themselves with the Colombian revolution? If they do not wish to join an already existent opposition group, are we going to prohibit them from taking part in the revolution? By what right? By right of the majority? Not at all, because they are the majority. By right of being better prepared? This can only be judged on the basis of facts, not identification cards or declaration. History will be the judge.

For now, let us have mutual respect, and rather than seek honour and high position in the revolutionary hierarchy, let us dedicate ourselves to the revolution. Let us call them whatever they wish to be called: 'non-aligned', 'aligned with the United Front', 'revolutionaries'. Although I do not approve of personality cult over considerations of organization, if this is subordinated to the ideal of the organization, we can

accept it for now. If the people wish to be called Camilists, then let them, on the condition that they organize. It is not a question of forming a new party or a new movement; it is a question of forming a new organization of the unorganized to get them to align themselves to the United Front and the revolution. But let us not oblige them to adopt new titles if they do not wish to.

It is logical that at high levels differences arise. Let us not get too worked up over this; let us just get on with the revolution. The people will be the ones to decide on the name of the non-aligned. The people will decide if, in the future, they will form another party. For now the task is to convince them to form a new organization that will become part of the United Front. In the task of forming this organization, all true revolutionaries and all members of the United Front of the People must join forces.

39. Message to Women*

Colombian women, like the women of all underdeveloped countries, have always been in an inferior position to men and society. These positions vary according to the standard of living of the people.

In the popular class the woman has many physical duties and almost no intellectual rights. The women of the popular class have the highest level of illiteracy. They must work without complaining and on occasion do the heavy work in and around the home (the garden, pigs, chickens, dogs, and so forth) with no time for the problems and responsibilities of motherhood.

The working-class woman enjoys no social and even less legal protection. When, in a country like ours, the husband,

* [Published in *Frente Unido*, 14 October 1965. - Ed.]

plagued by misery and unemployment, faced with the overwhelming responsibilities of a large family, takes refuge in vice and abandons his family, the wife must bear the whole burden. How many workers' homes during working hours are found closed and padlocked, full of half-clothed and half-starved children waiting for their mother to return home so they may get something to eat?

The middle-class woman is also exploited by men. It is possible that in this class relations with the husbands are more equalitarian. However, these families could not survive if the women did not work, and we know that the working woman, the office girl, suffers all types of exploitation and pressure from the boss.

The women of the upper class must be relegated to leisure, to card games and social affairs, because of the lack of intellectual and professional opportunities in our society. In this class, marital fidelity is required only of the woman. Censorship falls only on her when she commits an error of this type. Although the law calls for equal rights and duties, in reality such equality does not exist.

In politics, the men of the popular class have been up to now led by the caprice of the oligarchy. Abstention has been the first cry of revolt of a whole class which has no faith in the fabulous tales of the ruling class. There are other signs of unification and organization among the discontent. However, the oligarchy, like an octopus, is beginning to extend its tentacles to the Colombian women. Men of this class have given them the right to vote in order to continue using them as instruments.

The Colombian woman is a human being, not a mere instrument. The Colombian wife is aware that she is being exploited not only by society, as are the majority of Colombians, but also by her husband. The Colombian woman has a fighting discipline, has generosity in her sacrifices for others, and has greater resistance to physical pain. The Colombian

woman, like all women, has more sentiment, more sensitivity, and more intuition. All these qualities must be praised and put to use, not for the oligarchy or for men as such but for a revolutionary ideal converted into the ideal for women.

On the other hand, the woman has seen, perhaps because of more intuition, how the men have been deceived by voting cards and minor party struggles. The Colombian woman is not infected with the egoistic temptation of power. The oligarchy wishes to infect her with it, but it does not realize that if Colombian men are naturally suspicious, the women are even more so. They know very well that the vote is the new form of exploitation which the oligarchy has invented. The Colombian woman is readying herself for the revolution. She has been and will be the support of the revolutionary man. She has to be the heart of the revolution. If every revolutionary has a home with a wife who supports, understands, and helps him, we will have many more men deciding to fight. After the revolution, the wife will know that equality of rights and duties will not remain merely a dead letter but that it will be a reality that she herself, as a popular and revolutionary force, will be able to guarantee.

The problems of divorce and birth control that the Colombian wife thinks can be solved within a conformist and oppressive system can only be solved under a régime which respects the individual's conscience and individual, familial, and social rights. They can only be solved when the state has true autonomy and, at the same time, respect for the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The Colombian wife has sufficient generosity to be able to place her personal problems within the framework of a larger ideal where they will be resolved without neglecting the other needs of her fellow citizens. This ideal can be realized only by bringing about an authentic Colombian revolution.

40. The Platform and the Revolution*

The United Front of the People is the result of a number of years of experience and reflection. The intended union of the political opposition groups and the other dissatisfied Colombians had to face two main problems. The first is the lack of size, and the second is the lack of a clear definition. The size could easily have been limited by religious motives, traditional political motives, or group and leader loyalties. It was necessary to build a union around concrete objectives which would unify all Colombians regardless of religious beliefs, party, or group and leader attachments. The platform of struggle of the United Front of the People can be realized only after the people have taken power. Its only novelty consists in its seeking the common points of the revolution without entering into religious or party differences. It can be accepted by Catholics and non-Catholics, by poor Liberals and poor Conservatives, by the revolutionary elements of the MRL, the Communist, ANAPO, and Christian Democratic parties, and especially by the revolutionary elements of the non-aligned in these groups. However, it is necessary to explain that this platform leans toward the establishment of a socialist state, that is, 'socialist' understood only in a technical and positive sense, not in the ideological sense. We offer practical, not theoretical, socialism.

When a revolutionary platform is talked about, many experts become involved. However, when it is specified that the revolution must consist of a fundamental reorganization of the state by applying science and technology to bring about reforms benefiting the majorities, many bow out.

The platform does not mention tactics for taking power.

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However, some feel, as does Dr Alfonso López Michelsen, that this platform is not useful for an immediate electoral struggle; moreover, they feel that the platform is becoming associated with the name of Camilo Torres, and I have clearly given reasons why I will not run for election. Although these reasons may in no way justify any attack by me on the other opposition groups, revolutionary or not, in fact the electoral groups deviate from the platform on any excuse. On the other hand, the followers of the platform, when planning the take-over of political power as an indispensable condition for applying the platform, necessarily have to make a tactical decision – to follow through to the ultimate consequences and use whatever means the oligarchy leaves open to seize power. This attitude has no great ideological consequences because the church itself has established the conditions for a just war. However, many so-called revolutionaries in fact do not wish to follow through to the ultimate consequences.

A platform which plans a socialist state and the liberation of Colombia from American imperialism cannot be indifferent to movements which lean towards socialism and espouse liberation from imperialism. Even though these movements contain ideological elements that have discrepancies in scientific, positive, and practical aspects, they are more akin to us. This solidarity in practice drives away many timid revolutionaries who are more insistent on ideology than on revolution.

There is one fact evident in the movement of the United Front, and that is that it is a mass movement that has formed in little time. Thus, many have recently joined. Their motives for joining differ. Some came to acquire an important position and left frustrated. Others thought a new party was being formed, and they left the way they came – very quickly. As the revolutionary line of the United Front becomes more and more definite and aggressive, the fellow travellers of the revolution will continue to fall by the wayside to return home or

wait for the others to complete the revolution and then join it.

The important thing is that the Colombian popular class must continue to move forward, without a single step backwards, in spite of the defections, in spite of the rumours, in spite of the betrayals. The decision of the poor that they do not want their sons to accuse them in the future of having betrayed their historical and revolutionary vocation will be what determines the situation. They know that I will follow through to the ultimate consequences and that even if only a handful of determined men remain with me, we will continue the struggle nonetheless.

Although this is going to be a prolonged struggle, the important thing is that all who have decided to join us have also decided to stay with us to the end.

41. Message to the Students*

Students are a privileged group in every underdeveloped country. Poor nations subsidize the few college and university graduates at very high cost. In Colombia especially, with the great number of private colleges and universities, the economic factor has become crucial.

In a country whose population is 60 per cent illiterate, students comprise one of the few groups possessing instruments for social analysis and comparison and for finding possible answers to Colombia's problems. Furthermore, the university student, at those colleges where there is freedom of expression, has two privileges: he can climb the social ladder by rising through the academic ranks, and he can at the same time be a nonconformist and display his rebelliousness without placing his rise in jeopardy. These factors have

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made students a crucial element in the Latin-American revolution. During the agitational phase of the revolution, the students' efforts have been highly effective. In the organizational phase, their work has played a secondary role. In the direct struggle, notwithstanding the honourable exceptions which have occurred in revolutionary history, their role has not been crucial.

We know that agitational efforts are important, but that their real effects are lost if they are not followed by organization and by the struggle for power. One of the principal reasons for the transitory and superficial nature of the students' contribution to the revolution is the lack of commitment in their economic, familial, and personal struggles. A student's nonconformity tends to be either emotional (because of sentimental reasons or frustration) or else purely intellectual. This explains the fact that at the end of his university career, his nonconformity disappears or is, at best, hidden away. The rebellious student no longer exists. He becomes a bourgeois professional who buys the symbols of bourgeois prestige and barter his conscience for a high salary. These circumstances present grave dangers to a mature and responsible reply on the part of students at this moment in Colombia's history.

The workers and peasants are experiencing the political and economic crisis in all its harshness. The student, generally isolated from them, believes that a superficial or purely speculative revolutionary attitude is sufficient. This lack of contact can make the student a traitor to his historical vocation; when the country demands a total commitment, the student answers with nothing but words and good intentions. When the mass movement demands a daily and constant effort, the student replies with shouts, stonings, and sporadic demonstrations. When the people demand an effective, disciplined, and responsible presence in their ranks, the student answers with vain promises or excuses.

The student's revolutionary convictions must lead to real commitment taken to the ultimate consequences. Poverty and persecution should not be actively sought after, but they are the logical consequences of total struggle against the existing system. Under the present system, they are the signs that authenticate a revolutionary life. The same convictions should lead the student to participate in the economic hardships and social persecution which workers and peasants suffer. Therefore, commitment to the revolution passes from theory to practice. If it is total, it is irreversible, and the professional cannot renege without betraying his conscience, his historical vocation, and his people.

At this moment of revolutionary opportunity, I do not want to preach. I want only to encourage students to make contact with authentic sources of information to determine their responsibility and their necessary response. Personally, I believe that we are rapidly approaching the zero hour of the Colombian revolution. But only the peasants and workers can say this with any authority. If the students ascended to the people without paternalism and with spirit of learning, they could then judge objectively the historical moment. It would, however, be fruitless and disgraceful if Colombian students, who have been the spark of the revolution, remained at its margin for any reason: lack of information, superficiality, egoism, irresponsibility, or fear.

We hope that students will respond to their country's call in this transcendental moment of its history and that they will be encouraged to hear and follow it with boundless generosity.

42. Strengthening the Internal Organization*

The agitational phase of the revolutionary process, which the United Front has quickly brought about, is nearly at an end. The organization, although widespread throughout the country, is still rudimentary. The work of extending the organization must be complemented by efforts to build it up from within. Provisional commands of the United Front have been created practically all over the country. These commands have taken three different forms. The first is the homogeneous command of the organized groups that participate, formally or informally, in the United Front (the MOEC, the Communist Party, the ANAPO Vanguard, the MRL, the ANAPO, the Christian Democratic Party, and so forth). The second is the mixed command composed of elements from the previously mentioned groups and elements of the non-aligned. The third is the homogeneous command composed of the non-aligned in other groups.

Of these three types the most common is the second. The least organized is the command of the non-aligned. The United Front has established as the primary step the organization of the non-aligned. This designation seems too negative, since the non-aligned in the composed commands want very much to align themselves with the United Front and the Colombian revolution. Many of them, in the grass roots, say that they belong to the United Front, but this is ambiguous since the United Front is also composed of other groups which they had no desire to join up to now, groups which they cannot be obliged to join.

* [Published in *Frente Unido*, 21 October 1965. — Ed.]

Some feel that it is necessary to form a new party of the non-aligned for them to become a part of the United Front. However, the non-aligned have no common philosophy; they are united by the platform, by the person of Camilo Torres, by the tactic of active abstention, and by the steadfast decision to seize power for the popular class. These elements would be basic to the constitution not of a party but of a movement which would permit the harmonious assimilation of the non-aligned so that they may thus participate in the United Front. From this follows the necessity of forming commands of non-aligned and of strengthening the group of non-aligned in the mixed commands. The final decision on the form of organization on the non-aligned they themselves must furnish before the United Front convention.

In any case, the present need is to strengthen the existing commands. Those not formed in the grass roots (of simple farmers and workers) have been called provisional commands. Their main task is to organize the grass-roots commands and have them name definitive neighbourhood, district, factory, municipal, and department commands. In addition to the special assignments that the provisional commands must handle, according to the needs of each area, there are general assignments which must be carried out throughout the country, such as the previously mentioned organization of grass-roots commands and the no less important task of stimulating and supporting the associated bodies (of workers, farmers, and students) in all their activities of repossession, trying to orient them towards the definitive struggle for the takeover of power for the popular class.

All the commands must devote themselves to the formation of leaders through special courses, through command meetings, and through the dissemination of the platform. At this point we must sacrifice quantity for quality. To accomplish the assignments, one good street, district, or factory command is preferable to several bad commands. The popular

visage of the Colombian revolution will not arise simply from mass demonstrations. Each Colombian revolutionary should find a group of friends, neighbours, or co-workers with whom he could form a command group with the previously mentioned objectives. There is no need to await orders from above. In this way the United Front will acquire its own life, independent of the attitudes which the provisional leaders assume.

The attitudes of these leaders should conform to the wish of the masses. Towards the end of this year or the beginning of next, true representatives of the people, at a large popular convention, will elect the national command of the United Front, which will determine the tactics for the elections and for the takeover of power.

43. Message to the Unemployed*

Though it is certainly true that in all the capitalist countries, including the most developed – such as the United States – there is always a large percentage of the population which is unemployed, it is necessary to understand that in the underdeveloped countries the percentage is always larger. Lack of work for millions of men and women is precisely one of the characteristics of underdevelopment. Thus, we have in such a rich country as Colombia an oligarchy incapable of creating jobs for the thousands of Colombians who, each year, reach the age of employment and want to be useful members of society.

This oligarchy neither wants nor is able to open up new areas of work. It does not want to because it is an oligarchy which thinks more about itself than the country. It prefers sending its money out to Canada or Switzerland to investing

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it in Colombia. The oligarchy, because it is well aware of the sufferings it has caused the people, is afraid of the people, afraid of revolution, and, thus, it prefers to take its money out before it invests it in new industries. It prefers to invest it in luxurious clubs and spend it sumptuously rather than build new factories. It is not interested in creating new problems for itself by competing in the market against North American companies, nor does it have the courage or drive to seek in other countries – outside the United States – the technical and economic help necessary to industrialize our country. It is a conformist oligarchy which was 'born tired' and which has always thought more about itself and its foreign partners than about the true necessities of the Colombian people.

But even if it wanted to, our oligarchy could not industrialize Colombia. Its North American partners would not allow it. We all know that there are many companies which appear to be Colombian but, in fact, are more North American than Colombian: Avianca, Peblar, Icollantas, Croydon, and others. We all know that our economy is dependent on the coffee we sell primarily to the United States and on the 'aid' which this same United States gives us. We all know that ours is a beggar's state which is dependent on the crumbs that the Americans feel like giving us; we also know that they are not interested in our industrialization. The 'aid' which they give us goes into building some little schools, an occasional pilot community, perhaps a few latrines, but never will they help us to build new factories of heavy machinery, factories which in turn might build more factories and launch, consequently, new areas of employment. What interests the United States is to have countries which supply it with raw materials – both mineral and agricultural – at low prices and which purchase from it, at high prices, all the cars, all the machines, all the products of its industry which we need. The United States controls our economy, and our

oligarchy is very happy to be its agent and servant here.

This is why the unemployed are those who have to bear most heavily the consequences of our underdevelopment. The misery of their homes, the anguish of not being able to bring home the necessary goods, of not being able to pay the rent, of not being able to educate their children – all this proves to the unemployed the necessity to undertake the final struggle against the system. They know better than anyone that they are not poor because they do not want to work but because there is no work to be had. They know that it is not that the people are lazy but that the oligarchy, which is now the master of the sources of work and owner of the state, does nothing to solve our real problems.

Thus, the unemployed should head the fight to take power away from this minority and give it to the majority. They must be the first to understand that the people must organize, because it is they who suffer most the weight of the system. They must be the first to understand that, so long as the people do not have power, it will be impossible to solve the problems of our economy and, therefore, the problems of every Colombian home which are affected by unemployment.

What is most tragic is that the situation of chronic unemployment has no solution; on the contrary, every day it becomes worse. In the Ministry of Work there are hundreds of petitions by firms who want the authorization to fire personnel. And there are many who do it without permission. We all know that every day there are mass dismissals, and we know that many small firms are going bankrupt because the rise in the value of the dollar makes the price of raw materials for us jump dramatically.

On the other hand, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced from the country to the city as a result of the violence unleashed by the oligarchy against the peasants. The latter must understand that they must not expect their problems to be solved by their own executioners, by those

who created the violence, by those who have mortgaged the country, by those responsible for the misery. The problems have to be solved by the majority, one of whose most important sectors numerically is the unemployed.

Every day the crisis grows more acute. The oligarchy – always more greedy, more selfish, and more anti-national – every day pushes new contingents of the people into the revolutionary struggle. When a man or a woman no longer has anything to lose – not even a job with a salary of hunger – when participating in the struggle offers everything to win and only chains to lose, when this is the situation of all the people, then we know that the hour of our liberation is closer every minute.

This is the struggle of all the people against a handful of oppressors, whose only supports are arms and foreign aid. In such a fight the people will win, because there is no force capable of stopping the victory of a united people fighting for its rights, inspired by noble and generous ideals. Before dying of hunger or cold, before suffering more misery and humiliation, the people will fight to seize power once and for all. It is the oligarchy which is forcing us. The oligarchy has challenged the people, and we have accepted the challenge.

44. Message to the United Front of the People*

Two conditions have made it possible for the United Front of the Colombian People to gain, in only five months of life, the vitality and scope it has today. The first condition is our decision to wage the struggle until the end, no matter what the cost, until the people seize power. The second is our

* [Published in *Frente Unido*, 25 November 1965. – Ed.]

insistence on unity based on the platform, stressing what we have in common and ignoring what separates us. These two characteristics have attracted many independent revolutionaries who previously acted in isolation, diffusing their efforts and wasting their energy, so that now they work for the revolution through the United Front, adding their strength to that of the already existing organizations.

To obtain this vitality was not easy, and we have not yet achieved it completely. It is true that we already have comandos in all the major cities and in many of the small ones, too; it is true that our weekly continues to circulate among a large number of readers. But this is not enough. Unfortunately, Colombian revolutionaries often still do not understand the crucial importance of unity, and they easily let themselves fall into endless discussions which may be important but which, these days, do not reflect the desire for unity and for action which the majority of the people expect from us. In many cases, the revolutionaries worry more about their personal problems than about the revolution and place above it their own or their group's affairs.

What is worse is that in many cases real theoretical differences do not even exist, only simple grudges inherited from old disputes between groups and even individuals. But if we analyse the duties which we revolutionaries owe our people, if we take into account the immense task we have before us, if we can strip away a bit of our selfishness and sectarianism, we will see how trivial become all those small conflicts.

That is why I believe that one of the most important tasks for the non-aligned is precisely to bring together around our platform all revolutionaries, avoiding, if possible, divisive discussions among groups, parties, or even individuals. This is one of the major responsibilities for the non-aligned, and they must see to it that they are always trying to unite and not look for, or even permit, new reasons for conflict to arise. We must never forget that we are trying to increase our

efforts, not diminish them. After all, we have declared war to the death against all which is counter-revolutionary, and we have said that we are friends to *all* revolutionaries, *wherever they come from*.

We are not going to underestimate the help that any revolutionary can or wants to give to the revolution. We must look upon the United Front as a receptacle where the people and, in the first place, the revolutionaries can deposit as much or as little as they can give. At times, the modest help which a poor but dedicated revolutionary can offer is worth much more than the interested aid offered without conviction.

In any event, we can now state that we have some sort of organization in the whole country. Though it is not as extensive or disciplined as we had hoped, we can feel satisfied that we have reached a first stage and that all the agitation made through my trips and through our newspaper has paid off. But now our organization must tackle the next stage – consolidating and strengthening what we have built. We cannot permit the tasks of organization to become stagnant, because we are convinced that every minute we lose now we shall have to pay double when we must organize the people against the implacable persecution which the oligarchy will unleash against us. Within this plan, the preparations for the convention we will hold at the beginning of next year are of great importance, since the convention will be a decisive step.

Under no circumstances must the United Front disappear. Although pressures against us increase and more of our people get arrested, the United Front must still continue functioning. Even though I may have to seek a safe place on a moment's notice to be able to continue the struggle, the legal battles must not cease. For our part we shall continue to edit the paper until they close it down. And if they do, we will issue others. But we must do everything possible to keep

the visible organ of the United Front circulating throughout the country. This is the responsibility not only of those who write it but also of those who sell it and those who buy it.

We state the above because we have never had any illusions, nor have we talked of them to the popular class. I believe that the minority will generalize against the whole people the war of extermination which it has already initiated in certain regions of the country; and I believe that, consequently, the United Front must prepare itself, redoubling its efforts, to resist the coming avalanche from the oligarchy. What we are proposing is not simply to resist but to win, not to leave them alone if they leave us alone with our misery but, on the contrary, to decide once and for all our destiny by waging an open struggle of the people against the oligarchy in order to take power from it. Therefore, the United Front must strengthen itself more and more every day.

That is why we insist on the unity of all revolutionaries. We know that the stages ahead will be infinitely more difficult than those we have gone through so far. And if we do not fight united, we run the risk that the people will suffer much more, with less gain for the revolutionary cause. And if that is the case, it will be the revolutionaries who will bear the responsibility, for it will be they who will have been incapable of placing the interest of the people above petty disputes.

Our people are courageous. Our people are not afraid to wage war against the exploiting minority, because they have already suffered for many years without any hope whatsoever. Now our people have seen hope in the programme of the United Front, and so it would be criminal on our part to let them down. Hence, we must learn from the people. We must be stimulated by their example and their enthusiasm for the struggle. United, the people are invincible. United, they can conquer anyone or anything, no matter how many arms or how much money the enemy possesses.

Let us, then, make a great effort to turn our organization into the revolutionary movement which the people need. Let all the Christians, the Marxists, the non-aligned, the members of the MRL and of the ANAPO, the Liberals, the Conservatives, and all the poor of Colombia find in our organization the weapon capable of confronting the oligarchy. The tactical differences which separate us now do not matter; we must convince everyone, through our example, of the necessity of unity and of the possibility of attaining our final objective – the seizure of power by the people, whatever the cost.

45. Message to Political Prisoners*

The Colombian people must understand that the minority which holds power today is not going to hand it over to us without a struggle. It is necessary to remember the difficulty of the fight against the Spaniards in the last century and all the hardships which the revolutionaries then had to endure. It can even be said that a good way of judging just how revolutionary an individual or organization is consists of knowing whether or not the oligarchy persecutes that person or group. The more one is revolutionary, the more the oligarchy will be in pursuit. Both the foreigners and the oligarchy know full well who really wants to take power away from them and give it to the people and who only seeks personal gain.

The oligarchy is hence certainly aware who are its true enemies, and it hunts them relentlessly. Thus, Narino, for example, who fought with arms and who not only wanted to better the lot of the rich *criollos* but the people as well, had to spend so many years in jail, persecuted not only by the

* [Leaflet, dated November 1965. – Ed.]

Spaniards but also by many 'great leaders' of the oligarchy of the time, from which our own 'great leaders' descend today.

It is clear, then, that the oligarchy is going to persecute us with increasing ferociousness. When it realizes that we are ready to fight to the end to seize power for the people, this minority, which did not hesitate to plunge the country into violence, to sell our sovereignty to foreigners, to convert our soldiers into an army occupying its own country, this minority, whose hand did not flutter into a single tremble when it ordered our popular leaders assassinated, will unleash against the United Front and the popular organizations all the might of its repressive apparatus.¹

All this must not surprise us or frighten us. The oligarchy operates on a moral double standard: on one hand, it condemns revolutionary violence; on the other hand, it assassinates and jails the defenders and representatives of the popular class. The same double standard operates in the United States; while they talk of peace, they bomb Vietnam and invade the Dominican Republic. That is why the United States and our oligarchy get along so well. But since we know that they will not be able to jail all the people and that the armed peasants and organizations will not let themselves

1. [To Colombians, Torres's general remarks immediately suggest also two very specific deeds: the 1948 assassination of Colombia's great popular leader, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán and the 1964 army invasion of the 'independent republics', areas deep inland where peasants had set up functioning collective communities, an invasion which included mass bombings (including napalming of at least thirty-two villages), indiscriminate strafing of anything that moved (not only peasants, women, and children but also cattle and other animals), helicopter raids, and the rape and murder of thousands of women and beheading of anyone suspected of being a rebel, by 16,000 soldiers. The operation was directed by United States 'technical advisers'. See, among other works, Germán Guzmán, *La Violencia en Colombia*, Cali, Ediciones Progreso, 1968. - Ed.]

be thrown into the sea, we are not frightened of the repression to be unleashed against us.

I have already said that it is a duty of revolutionaries not to let themselves be assassinated. If they persecute us in the cities, we will go to the country where we will be on equal terms with the envoys of the oligarchy. Unfortunately, not all revolutionaries can or should resort to such extreme means, and, thus, many will be jailed by the oligarchy and, inevitably, as is usual under all tyrannical governments, will be tortured. But the revolutionary who is jailed does not by that fact stop being a valiant element in the revolutionary struggle.

From jail, the revolutionary must give the people the example of bravery and decisiveness, of self-sacrifice and loyalty to the revolution. He must spend time studying, preparing himself to understand better the justice of revolutionary ideals, and toughening himself even more for the day he regains his freedom. Furthermore, the political prisoner must show his guards and the other prisoners that there is a fundamental difference between himself and the common criminal. The revolutionary must demand by his conduct that his jailers treat him as fighter for the people. There is nothing more demoralizing for the enemy than our bravery, than our integrity. Instead of feeling shame for being a prisoner, the revolutionary must feel pride in the fear he evokes in the oligarchy, pride in the fact that he suffers **persecution for justice.**

For its part, the popular class must see in the jailed revolutionary another stimulus to fight against the oligarchy. It must see in him a vanguard combatant who deserves all the appreciation and support. Consequently, it must give him all its solidarity by demanding his liberty and by sending him information, food, money, clothing, and books. However, the greatest support that the popular organizations and the revolutionaries can give the prisoner is to step up the

struggle. It is necessary that our comrade deprived of freedom knows that while he is behind bars thousands and thousands of men and women are fighting to bring about the revolution – fighting to set him free. The best way for the people not to be prisoners is for the people to seize power.

It does not matter then that the oligarchy is trying to frighten revolutionaries. It does not matter that the oligarchy betrays its 'democratic' principles and delivers all its judicial power to the army in order to wash its hands and oblige the army to sin again in the eyes of the people, condemning the revolutionaries in verbal war councils. Perhaps one day the military themselves will become aware of the hypocrisy and Pharisaic behaviour of our twenty-four millionaire families and of the unscrupulous politicians who serve as their mouth-pieces.

For our part, nothing will stop us from our struggle to organize the people and join them in seizing power, no matter what the cost. And we say this because we know it is the decision of the majority, without whose support and active participation neither jail nor the hardships of the struggle would make sense or give us hope.

46. Message to the Oligarchy*

To direct a message to those who neither want it nor can hear it is very hard. Nevertheless, it is a duty, and a historical duty, in the moment when the Colombian oligarchy is trying to culminate its iniquity against the country and against

* [Published in *Frente Unido*, 9 December 1965. This was the last issue edited by Camilo Torres; the newspaper reappeared under the editorship of Monsignor Germán Guzmán, a friend of Torres's, on 9 April 1968, commemorating Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, who was assassinated twenty years earlier on that day. – Ed.]

all Colombians. For more than a hundred and fifty years, this economic caste, the few families which own almost all of Colombia's riches, has usurped political power for its own benefit. It has used all the tricks and gimmicks to keep this power and fool the people.

These families invented the division between Liberals and Conservatives. This division, which the people did not understand, was used to foment hatred among the different sectors of the people. These ancestral hatreds transmitted from father to son served only the oligarchy. While the poor fought, the rich governed for their own profit. The people did not understand the politics of the rich. But all the anger they felt for not being able to eat or study, for being sick, without home, without land and without work – all this rancour poor Liberals discharged against poor Conservatives, and poor Conservatives against poor Liberals. The oligarchs, who were guilty for the miserable condition of the poor, happily watched the bullfights from the sidelines, earning money and governing the country. The only thing that divided the Liberal oligarchs from the Conservative oligarchs was how to split up the budget and public offices. The national budget, the public income, was not enough to satisfy both the Liberal and Conservative oligarchs; so they fought each other to gain power, to liquidate their electoral debts by giving public posts to loyal chieftains, and to divide up the budget without having to share it at all with their political enemies.

For forty years the Liberals were denied political plums. Then the pork barrel was kept from the Conservatives for sixteen years. Meanwhile, all political and religious differences among them had ceased. They never fought among themselves for anything but the money of the government and public offices. Meanwhile, the people began to realize that their fight for the Liberal or Conservative party engulfed them steadily more in misery. The rich did not realize that the people were getting sick of them. When Jorge Eliécer

Gaitán appeared unfurling the flag of the moral restoration of the Republic, he did so as much against the Liberal oligarchy as against the Conservative. That is why both oligarchies were anti-Gaitán. The Liberal oligarchy decided to become pro-Gaitán only after the Conservative oligarchy killed him in the streets of Bogotá.¹

Once launched on the road of violence to maintain itself in power, the oligarchy has not ceased to use it. It pushed Liberal peasants into killing Conservative peasants. When the aggression, the hatred, and the rancour of the poor spilled over into a general war for necessities, the oligarchy got scared and fostered a military coup. But the military government did not sufficiently serve the interests of the oligarchy. Thus, the chief of the Liberal oligarchy, Dr Alberto Lleras Camargo, and the chief of the Conservative oligarchy, Dr Laureano Gómez, got together to examine their consciences and said, 'Because of our fighting over the budget and the spoils of bureaucracy, we almost lost power. Let us stop fighting for this and make a deal, dividing the country like one divides a ranch, in the middle, between the two oligarchies. Parity and alternation will allow us to share equally, and we can form a new party, the party of the oligarchy.' And so was born the National Front, the first class party, the party of the Colombian oligarchy.²

1. [Gaitán was a Liberal, but what little concrete evidence there is about the conspiracy against him (the police were tipped off to watch for an assassin and shot the culprit on the spot) tends to show that both the Liberal and Conservative oligarchies planned the murder together. — Ed.]

2. [Torres's description of the National Front is no exaggeration. The Liberals and Conservatives decided to alternate power every four years, banned all other parties, and established parity, that is, each government would hire an equal number of ministers, diplomats, functionaries, porters, drivers, and washroom attendants from each party. Thus, Lleras was president from 1958 to 1962. He was followed by Conservative Guillermo León Valencia (1962–6). Then came Carlos

The people were fooled once again, went to the polls to approve the plebiscite, and elected Alberto Lleras and the National Front. The result naturally was worse: now a united oligarchy governed against the people. And so everything that the people expected turned out to be the opposite. The National Front offered peace, and the peasants continued to be assassinated. There were mass killings of sugar workers and of workers in Santa Barbara. The universities were invaded, and the budget for war was increased.

The National Front promised to solve the financial situation and instead doubled the external debt, three times (until now) devalued our money, and multiplied innumera- bly the misery of the people for generations to come. The National Front said it would enact an agrarian reform and, instead, dictated a law which guarantees the riches of the rich against the rights of the poor. It put into the Presidency of the Republic an inept candidate. It gained the greatest electoral abstention in our history.³ And now, in its total failure, what is the oligarchy doing? It takes recourse again to violence. It declares a state of siege. It legislates by decree. It sells the country to the United States. It gets together in a luxurious hotel and selects the next President. In salons it decides what is good for the whole country. It is totally blind.

As a last cry of alarm, I want to give the following mes- sage. Gentlemen oligarchs, the people no longer believe any- thing you say. The people do not want to vote for you. The people have had enough and are desperate. The people do not want to participate in the elections which you organize. The people do not want either Carlos or Alberto Lleras or anyone

Lleras Restrepo (1966-70). This year a Conservative must be president. If a politician wants to run for office and is not a member of the two legal parties, he must either join one and try to fool the machinery or else emigrate to another country (or else start a revolution). - Ed.]

3. [Both in 1962 and 1966, more than 70 per cent of eligible voters abstained. - Ed.]

else from among you. The people are suffering and are ready for anything to change that. The people know that you, too, are ready to do anything to stop changes. So I ask you to be realistic, and if you still want to fool the people with political shenanigans, do not think that they will believe you. You must realize that the fight is to the finish. Their experience has been so bitter that they are ready to go whole hog. But unfortunately, you isolated, blind, and vain oligarchs appear not to realize that the revolution of Colombia's popular masses will not stop until the people seize power.

47. Message to Colombians from the Mountains*

Colombians:

For many years now, the poor of our land have been waiting for the call to arms to throw themselves into the final struggle against the oligarchy. On the occasions when it seemed that the people's desperation had reached the critical point, the ruling class always found the means to deceive the people, to distract them, appeasing them with new formulas that always added up to the same thing – suffering for the people and well-being for the privileged caste.

When the people demanded a leader, and found him in Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, the oligarchy murdered him. When the people demanded peace, the oligarchy sowed violence throughout the country. When the people could no longer withstand violence and organized the guerrillas to seize power, the oligarchy pulled a military coup out of its hat so that the guerrillas, who were tricked, would surrender. When

* [Published in *El Vespertino*, 7 January 1966. This was Camilo Torres's last dispatch. – Ed.]

the people demanded democracy, they were tricked once again, this time with a plebiscite and a National Front imposed upon them by the dictatorship of the oligarchy.

But the people will no longer believe, never again. The people do not believe in elections. The people know that the legal means have been exhausted. The people know that armed struggle is the only remaining course. The people are desperate, and they are determined to risk their lives so that the next generation of Colombians will not be one of slaves; so that the children of those who now are willing to give their lives will have an education, a roof over their heads, food, clothing, and, above all, dignity; and so that the Colombians of the future will have their own homeland, independent of the might of the United States.

All sincere revolutionaries must realize that armed struggle is the only remaining way open. However, the people wait for their leaders to set an example and issue the call to arms by their presence in the struggle. I want to tell the Colombian people that the time is now and that I have not betrayed them. I have gone from village to village and from city to city, speaking in the public squares in favour of the unity and organization of the popular classes to take power. I have said to the people, 'Let us all devote ourselves to these goals until death!'

Everything is prepared. The oligarchy means to organize another force at election time, with candidates who deny their candidacy only finally to be 'drafted', with two-party committees. They pretend a new beginning with ideas and people that not only are old but have betrayed the people. What are we waiting for, Colombians?

I have joined the armed struggle.

From the Colombian mountains I mean to continue the struggle, arms in hand, until power has been won by the people. I have joined the Army of National Liberation because I have found in it the same ideals of the United Front. I found

the desire and the attainment of unity at the base, a peasant base, without traditional religious or party differences, and without any interest in combating the revolutionary elements of any sector, movement, or party. And without *caudillismo*. This is a movement that seeks to free the people from exploitation by the oligarchy and imperialism, a movement that will not lay down its arms as long as power is not entirely in the hands of the people, and a movement that, in its goals, accepts the platform of the United Front

All we Colombian patriots must ready ourselves for war. Little by little, we will emerge ready for war. Little by little, experienced guerrilla leaders will appear in all parts of the country. Meanwhile, we must be alert. We must gather weapons and ammunition, seek guerrilla training, talk with those who are closest to us. We must collect clothing, medical supplies, and provisions in preparation for a protracted struggle.

We must carry out small-scale attacks against the enemy where we can be sure of victory. We must put those who claim to be revolutionaries to the test. We must not refrain from acting, but neither must we grow impatient. In a long, drawn-out war, everyone must go into action at some point. What matters is that the revolution finds them ready and on their guard. We must divide the work. The activists of the United Front must be in the vanguard of action and initiative. We must have patience while we wait and confidence in final victory. The people's struggle must become a national one. We have already begun, and we have a long day's work ahead of us.

Colombians: let us not fail to answer the call of the people and the revolution.

Activists of the United Front: let us turn our watch-words into reality:

For the unity of the popular classes, until death!

For the organization of the popular classes, until death!

For the taking of power for the popular classes, until death!

We say 'until death' because we are determined to carry on to the end. We say 'until victory' because a people that throws itself into the struggle until death will always achieve victory. We say 'until final victory', with the watchwords of the Army of National Liberation: NOT ONE STEP BACK! LIBERATION OR DEATH!

Appendix A: Camilo Torres's Mother to Pope Paul VI*

Bogotá, 21 August 1968

Holy Father:

I present myself to your Holiness as the mother of the priest Camilo Torres Restrepo.

The universally known case of my son, Camilo Torres Restrepo, reflects a situation of misery, oppression, and exploitation suffered by a majority of our people. It demands a radical change in the economic, political, and social structures of our country.

Camilo believed that his mission, as a Christian and a priest, could not be fulfilled without a revolution to liberate the poor, the peasants, the workers, and the intellectuals – indeed, all the oppressed classes. As a consequence, he became a revolutionary and opted to involve himself in the armed struggle. This painful course was imposed on him by the violence practised by the oligarchical classes of my country.

Camilo never preached violence for its own sake. He consistently stated that the ultimate decision belonged to the ruling classes. If they were disposed to abandon peacefully their privileges, the struggle could be peaceful. But, if, as they have demonstrated, they were obstinate in trying to maintain themselves in power, the people would have no other means to defend themselves except armed struggle.

Camilo proclaimed the urgency of liberating the country from imperialist domination. He believed that there could be no basic structural change without freeing ourselves from imperialism, which is an inhuman and un-Christian form of domination.

In essence, Camilo's thought coincides with what your Holiness later proclaimed in the encyclical *Populorum pro-*

* [Isabel Restrepo de Torres, quoted in Germán Guzmán, *Camilo Torres*, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1969, pp. 260–62. – Ed.]

gressio, which impressed the entire world with its profound social significance.

Because of his courageous and constant preaching of these principles, my son Camilo Torres Restrepo was sacrificed somewhere in the Colombian hills. Like all those who prophesied and sowed the seeds of the renewal of the church, my son had to suffer misunderstanding, personal attacks, and calumny.

I do not pretend to make a defence of my son to your Holiness, who are so profoundly human, whose wisdom has penetrated and pointed out the inequalities which exist between the various sectors of Christianity. I realize how difficult it is to make my mother's voice penetrate the lofty dignity of your office. But it is significant that it is precisely Colombia – the homeland of Camilo Torres Restrepo, the priest sacrificed for the defence of his humble people, who suffer hunger and thirst for justice – that has been chosen for such a grandiose celebration as the International Eucharistic Congress.

I have suffered this rude shock in silence, without asking any more consolation than that the body of my son be returned to me to render it the pious tribute which the church itself prescribes for her dead. I ask that his remains may repose with mine in a consecrated place.

Why am I denied this elemental right which I have again and again begged of the Colombian government? I do not know, but it is certain that the body of my son lies ignored in some hidden place in Colombia. My sorrow grows in the face of the cruelty of this overwhelming injustice.

Holy Father, forgive me for disturbing the peace of your visit to Colombia with my sad request, but I am certain that with your intercession I shall obtain the supreme and ultimate consolation of recovering the remains of my son, sacrificed on the altar of the purest ideal; the restoration of the doctrine of Christ.

In hopes of your benevolence, I remain your daughter in Christ,

Isabel Restrepo de Torres

Appendix B: Gospel and Revolution: Pastoral Letter from the Third World*

As bishops of some of the nations who labour and struggle to develop their resources, we join our voices to the anxious appeal of Pope Paul VI in the encyclical *Populorum progressio*. Our purpose is to name the duties of the clergy and the faithful and to speak words of encouragement to all our brothers of the Third World.

Our churches in the Third World find themselves involved in the conflict which not only pits East against West but engages the three major groups of nations: the Western powers grown wealthy in the last century; the two Communist countries transformed into great powers; and, finally, the nations of this Third World, which are still trying to escape domination by the great powers so that they can develop themselves freely.

Even within advanced nations, certain social classes, certain races, and certain people are still denied their rights to a truly human life. In these deprived groups there is an irresistible drive towards freedom from all the forces of oppression. Although the majority of the nations of the world have succeeded in gaining their political freedom, there are still few countries economically free. There are just as few in which the people live in the social equality that is indispensable to true brotherhood; peace is impossible without justice. The nations of the Third World are the proletariat of mankind today. They are exploited by the great powers and their very existence is threatened by those who, just because they are the great powers, presume to be the rightful judges and

* [Written in Recife, Brazil, under the direction of Dom Helder Câmara, Archbishop of Recife, on 15 August 1967, but first published in French in *Témoignage Chrétien* (Paris), 31 August 1967. - Ed.]

policemen of people materially less prosperous, although in our countries there is neither less honesty nor less justice than inside the great nations themselves.

For the world to evolve as it has today, revolutions have had to take place. Others are now on the verge of taking place. This is not at all surprising. All the powers now established were born – in a more or less direct era – out of revolution: they were born from a break with a system that no longer assured the common good and from the founding of a new order more likely to attain it. Revolutions are not invariably good. Some are no more than palace revolts and do no more than remove one set of oppressors of the people and replace them with another. Some revolutions do more harm than good, ‘sowing the seeds of new injustices’ (*Populorum progressio*). Mankind is gravely endangered by the atheism and collectivism to which certain movements believe they should tie themselves. History shows, however, that even some of these revolutions were necessary. And some of them have shaken off their momentary antagonism towards religion, with good results. Nowhere is this better proved than in the revolution which took place in 1789 in France, affirming the rights of man (*Pacem in terris*, Nos 11–27). Many of our nations have undergone – or should undergo – these profound changes. What should be the attitude of Christians and of churches facing this situation? In the encyclical on the development of people (*Populorum progressio*, Nos 30–32) Pope Paul VI showed us the course to follow.

From the doctrinal point of view, the church knows that the gospel demands the first and the most radical revolution – conversion, total transformation from sin to grace, from selfishness to love, from pride to humble service. And this conversion not only is inner and spiritual but is addressed to the whole man, the physical and social creature as well as the unique spiritual person. Conversion has a communal aspect, with far-reaching consequences for the entire society. This is true not only for life on earth but, above all, for eternal life through the intercession of Christ, Who, from on

high, draws all mankind to Him. For Christians, conversion is the total development of man. Hence, the gospel has provided, visibly or invisibly, inside or outside the church, the most powerful ferment for the profound changes wrought by men over the course of the last twenty centuries.

Nevertheless, in its historical, earthly pilgrimage, the church has almost always been linked to the political, social, and economic system which, at a given moment of history, assured the common good or at least maintained certain social order. The churches find themselves so bound to the secular system that they seem to be confused, merged in a single flesh, as in marriage. But the church has only one bridegroom, Christ. The church is not married to any system whatsoever, and least of all to the 'international imperialism of money' (*Populorum progressio*). As it had no real valid ties to the royal houses or old feudal régimes, the church of tomorrow will not be tied to one socialism or another. A review of history suffices to show that the church has survived, witnessing the downfall of powers which at one time believed that they had a duty to protect the church or that they could use the church. Now, the social doctrine of the church, reaffirmed by the Vatican Council II, has rescued it from this imperialism of money that seems to be one of the forces to which it was for some time tied.

After the Vatican Council, resolute voices were raised, asking that this temporal coalition of the church and money be denounced on all sides. Certain bishops have set the example. We ourselves have the duty to make a serious study of our position on this problem and to free our churches of all servitude to great international finances: 'You cannot serve God and mammon' (Matthew vi, 24). Confronted by the present evolution of the imperialism of money, we must pronounce to our faithful the warning which the prophet of Patmos addressed to the Christians of Rome when they faced the imminent fall of that great but prostituted city whose luxury derived from the oppression of other people and from the traffic of slaves: 'Go out from her, my people, that you

may not share in her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues' (Apocalypse xviii, 4).

When one considers what is essential and permanent in the church, that is to say, loyalty to and communion with Christ in the gospel, then the church owes no allegiance to any economic, political, and social system. At the very moment that a system stops assuring the common good and favours the interests of a few, the church should not only denounce injustice but also separate itself from the iniquitous system and be ready to cooperate with another, more just system, one better adapted to the needs of the times.

This attitude is valid for Christians, for their hierarchical leaders, and for their churches. In this world we do not have permanent cities, inasmuch as our Lord, Jesus Christ, preferred to suffer outside the city (Hebrews xiii, 12-14). Let none of us remain tied to privileges or to money, but rather let us be willing to share all that we have as common property. These sacrifices are pleasing to God (Hebrews xiii, 16). Even if we have not been able to do it voluntarily through love, let us know at least how to recognize the hand of God, correcting us like children through the events that compel us to make this sacrifice (Hebrews xii, 5). We neither judge nor condemn anyone who has ever believed or believes today that he follows the will of God by exiling himself to preserve his faith or that of his descendants. The ones to be strongly condemned are those who drive others away by oppressing them materially or spiritually or by seizing their lands.

Christians and their pastors should remain among their people on their own land. History shows that it is not good for a people to go as exiles to take refuge far from their own lands. In the case of unjust foreign aggression, peoples should defend their countries. When the government is changed by a process within their own countries, they should become reconciled with the new régimes.

It is a mistake for Christians not to be loyal to their own countries and to their own people in times of trial. Above all, it is a mistake for rich Christians to flee if they do so to retain

their wealth and privileges. Certainly, a family or an individual may be obliged to leave his country to look for work, according to the right to emigrate (*Pacem in terris*). But mass exodus of Christians can bring about lamentable situations. It is on their own land, in their own countries, that Christians are normally called by God to live out their lives in solidarity with their brothers of another religion, whatever that may be, and thus bear witness to Christ's love for all men.

As priests and bishops, we have the still more urgent duty to remain where we are, as vicars of the Good Shepherd, who in perilous times surely does not flee as hirelings do but remains in the midst of the multitudes and is disposed to lay down his life for his flock (John x, 11-18). When Jesus told his apostles, 'When they persecute you in one town, flee to another' (Matthew x, 23), He was speaking of individual persecution because of the Christian faith. A different standard applies in the case of war or of a revolution that affects an entire people in whom the pastor should be loyal. He should remain among his own people. If all the people decide to go into exile, the pastor could follow the multitude, but he must not save himself alone or just a few of the frightened or selfish.

Moreover, Christians and their pastors should be able to recognize the hand of the Almighty in the events that from time to time overthrow the powerful, raise up the humble, empty the hands of the rich, and satisfy the hungry. Nowadays, 'The world cries out with tenacity and virility, asking that human dignity be recognized fully and demanding the social equality of all classes.'¹

Christians and all men of good will should join this movement, even if they must renounce their privileges and their personal fortunes, so that the human community may benefit from greater socialization. The church is by no means the guardian angel of big properties. Together with Pope John

1. [Patriarch Maximos IV Saigh, of Antioch, at the Vatican Council, 27 October 1964. - Ed.]

XXIII, the church asks that property be shared among all men. Property exists to be placed at the service of man [*Mater et magistra*, Nos. 389-91].

Not long ago Pope Paul VI reminded us of the words of Saint John: 'He who has the goods of this world and sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him.' (1 John iii, 17). He also reminded us of the words of Saint Ambrose: 'The earth is given to all, not to the rich alone' (*Populorum progressio*, No. 23).

All the priests of the East, as well as those of the West, repeat the words of the Scripture:

'Share your harvest with your brothers. Share these fruits which tomorrow will be rotten. Ghastly selfishness lets all this spoil rather than give it to the poor!' 'How can I be wrong if I keep what is mine?' answers the miser. 'But tell me what are the goods which belong to you? How did you get them? You are like the man who, having taken his place at the theatre, wants to stop others coming in so that he may enjoy alone the spectacle that belongs to all. So are the rich: the goods which they have accumulated they declare to be theirs because they were the first to have them. If each man kept only what he uses for his everyday needs and gave the rest to others, poverty and wealth would be abolished. To the hungry belongs the bread you hoard. To the naked, the coat you store in your closet. To the barefooted, the shoes rotting in your home. To the miserable, the money you hide. Thus you oppress as many people as you could help . . . No, it is not your rapacity we condemn here, it is your refusal to share.'²

Aware of the need for certain material progress, the church during the last century has endured capitalism, with its usurious loans and its other practices hardly in keeping with the morality of the prophets and of the Gospel. But the church cannot fail to rejoice at the advent of another social system not so far removed from Christian morality. The Christians of tomorrow will have the task of following Pope Paul's initiative and tracing the current moral values, solidarity, and fraternity back to their true Christian origin

2. [Saint Ambrose, *Homily Against Injustice*. - Ed.]

(*Ecclesiam suam*). 'It is the Christian's duty to show that true socialism in Christianity wholeheartedly practised by sharing fairly material goods and by living in fundamental equality.'³

Far from working against it, let us learn to embrace socialism with joy, as a way of life better adapted to our time and more in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel. Thus, we will avoid causing anybody to confuse God and religion with feudalism, capitalism, and imperialism, the worldly oppressors of the poor and of the workers of the world. These inhuman systems have engendered others which, in their attempt to free peoples, have, instead, also become oppressors, falling into totalitarian collectivism and religious persecution. But God and true religion have nothing to do with the various forms of mammon and iniquity. On the contrary, God and true religion are always on the side of those who seek to build a more equitable and brotherly society among the sons of God in the great human family.

The church is proud and happy to hail a new humanity which does not honour money in the hands of a few but rather honours the workers and peasants. The church is nothing without Him Who unceasingly shows us how to live, how to act, Jesus of Nazareth, Who during so many years chose to work with his hands to reveal the eminent dignity of workers. 'The worker is infinitely superior to all money', as one bishop reminded the [Vatican] Council.⁴ Another bishop, from a socialist country, declared :

If the workers do not in some way become owners of their work, all the reforms of the structures will be useless. Even if workers at times receive higher wages in some economic systems, they will not be content with those salary increases. They want to be owners, not peddlers of their work. Today workers are constantly more aware that work constitutes part of the human being. The human being cannot be bought nor sold. All sale or purchase

3. [Patriarch Maximos IV Saigh at the Council, 28 September 1965. — Ed.]

4. [Monsignor Georges Hakim, Bishop of Acre, Israel, at the Council, 10 November 1964. — Ed.]

of work is a kind of slavery. The evolution of human society progresses in this sense. It certainly progresses within the system which is said not to be so sensitive as we are about the dignity of the human being – that is, Marxism.⁵

In other words, the church rejoices to see developing in humanity societies in which work finds its true place – first place. As Archpriest Borovoy⁶ recognized in the Ecumenical council of the Churches, we have made the mistake of accommodating ourselves to pagan juridical principles inherited from ancient Rome. In this respect, East and West have sinned the same. He said:

Of all the Christian civilizations, the Byzantine has contributed most to sanctify social evil. Without protest, it adopted all the social heritage of the pagan world and pronounced upon that heritage a sacramental blessing. For much more than a thousand years in Byzantium and in medieval Europe and for several centuries in Russia, beginning in the period (the sixth century) when our country began to be considered the heir of Byzantium, the civil law of the pagan Roman Empire was preserved in the guise of ecclesiastical tradition. But this is in direct contradiction to the social tradition of early Christianity and of the early Greek fathers of the church, is contrary to the missionary preaching of our Saviour, and is contrary to all the teaching of the ageless prophets of the Old Testament.⁷

Let nobody try to find political motivation in our words. Our only source of inspiration is the word which spoke to prophets and apostles. The Old and New Testaments denounce as sin against God every blow to the dignity of man, created in God's own image.

This urgent need for the human being to be respected is what has moved the atheists of good faith to join Christians in common service to humanity and in a search for justice and peace. In that very spirit we can with confidence address

5. Franjo Franič, of Split, Yugoslavia, 4 October 1965.

6. [Vitaly Borovoy, Russian Orthodox observer at the Ecumenical Council. – Ed.]

7. [Vitaly Borovoy, at the World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 7 December 1966. – Ed.]

our words of encouragement to all men. All men need valour and strength to carry to a good finish that immense and urgent undertaking which alone can save the Third World from wretchedness and hunger and can free humanity from the catastrophe of a nuclear war: 'No more war, war never again. Drop your weapons.'⁸

The people of the poor nations and the poor peoples of the other nations, among whom the Merciful Father has placed us as pastors, know by experience that they must rely on themselves and on their own resources and strength rather than on the help of the rich. It is true that some rich nations and some of the rich of certain other nations give some aid to our peoples, but it would be an illusion to expect a free conversion of those of whom our father Abraham warns us: 'They will not believe even if someone rises from the dead' (Luke xvi, 31). First the poor nations and the poor of the other nations must advance themselves.

Let them regain confidence in themselves. Let them overcome illiteracy and become educated. Let them work steadfastly towards a better destiny. Let them enlighten themselves, utilizing all the means that modern society places within their reach, such as schools and publications. Let them listen to those who can awaken and organize the masses. Above all, let them heed what their pastors tell them. Let the pastors spread everywhere the word of truth and the gospel of justice.

Let the militant laity of all apostolic movements understand and translate into deeds the exhortation of Pope Paul VI:

... it belongs to the laymen, without waiting passively for orders and directives, to take the initiative freely and to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws, and structures of the community in which they live. Changes are necessary, basic reforms are indispensable; the laymen should strive resolutely to permeate them with the spirit of the Gospel [*Populorum progressio*, No. 81].

8. [Pope Paul VI, address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, New York City, 1965. - Ed.]

Finally, let the workers and the poor unite. Only by uniting will they be strong enough to make demands and to advance towards true justice.

The people hunger for truth and justice, and those whose mission is to orient and educate them must do so with enthusiasm. Some errors must urgently be corrected. No, God does not want the rich to take advantage of the goods of this world, exploiting the poor. No, it is not God's will that there should always be wretched poor. Religion is not the opium of the people. Religion is a force that lifts up the humble and brings down the proud, that gives bread to the hungry and causes the overfed to feel hunger. Certainly Jesus warned us that there would always be poor among us (John xii, 8). But that is because there will always be the rich who monopolize the goods of this world and because there will always be certain inequalities that arise from differences in ability and other inevitable factors.

But Jesus teaches us that the second commandment is equal to the first, inasmuch as it is not possible to love God without loving the brothers of Jesus – all men. He warns us that all men will be judged by a single phrase: '... I was hungry and you gave me to eat ... I was hungry ...' (Matthew xxv, 35, 42). Those words are echoed in all the great religions and in all the wisdom of humanity. The Koran speaks of the final question in the hour of God's judgement:

And who shall teach thee what the steep [highway] is? It is to ransom the captive, or to feed in the day of famine, the orphan ... or the poor that lieth in the dust ... and enjoin compassion on each other.⁹ (Sura 90: 11–18)

It is our duty to share our bread and all our worldly goods. If some men try to hoard for themselves what is needed by others, the duty of the civil authorities is to compel them to share. In his most recent encyclical Pope Paul VI reminds us of this:

9. [*The Koran*, trans. J. M. Rodwell, London, J. M. Dent & Sons. – Ed.]

... the common good sometimes demands the expropriation of certain landed estates ... while giving a clear statement on this, the Council recalled no less clearly that the available revenue is not to be used in accordance with mere whim and that no place must be given to selfish speculation. Consequently it is unacceptable that citizens with abundant incomes from the resources and activity of their country should transfer a considerable part of this income abroad purely for their own advantage, without care for the manifest wrong they inflict on their country by doing this [*Populorum progressio*].

It is also unacceptable for rich foreigners to exploit poor countries on the pretext of creating commerce or industry, just as it cannot be tolerated that the rich of some countries exploit their own people. This abuse drives the people to exasperation and nationalism, an attitude always to be regretted because it is an obstacle to true collaboration among peoples.

What is true for individuals is true for nations. Unfortunately, nowadays no true world government can enforce justice among people and divide goods fairly. The present economic system permits rich nations to continue to grow richer. They do give a little help to poor nations. But the poor nations make no progress because they are unable to demand and obtain the fair distribution of goods which is indispensable to peace (*Pacem in terris*, No. 137; *Populorum progressio*, No. 78).

Within each country the workers have the right and duty to unite in authentic labour unions for the purpose of making demands and of defending their rights to fair salary, paid vacation, social security, family housing, and participation in the policy-making of the company. It is not enough for these rights to be recognized just on paper and just in laws. They must be applied, and it is the governments' responsibility to use their power in the interest of the workers and of the poor. The governments must put an end to the class struggle which – contrary to the usual accusation – has been unleashed by the rich in order to continue profiteering, exploiting the

workers through inadequate pay and inhuman working conditions.

In the subversive class-war that has long been waged by monetary interests all over the world, entire peoples have been massacred. The time has come for poor peoples, upheld and guided by their legitimate governments, to succeed in the defence of their right to life. God revealed himself to Moses, saying: 'I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry of complaint against their slave drivers, so I know well what they are suffering. Therefore I have come down to rescue them . . .' (Exodus iii, 7). Jesus took it upon Himself to lead all mankind to life eternal. The early preparation for that life is social justice, the first form of brotherly love. Since through His resurrection Christ overcame death for all mankind, He leads all human freedom movements to eternal fulfilment.

So to all men we repeat those words of the Gospel that some of us¹⁰ read last year to our peoples whose anxieties and whose hopes are those of all the Third World: 'But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand' (Luke xxi, 28).

Helder Câmara, Archbishop of Recife, Brazil

Jean-Baptiste Da Mota e Albuquerque, Archbishop of Victoria, Brazil

Luis Gonzaga Fernandes, Auxiliary Bishop of Victoria, Brazil

Georges Mercier, Bishop of Laghouat, Sahara, Algeria

Michel Darmancier, Bishop of Wallis and Futuna, Oceania

Armand Hubert, Apostolic Vicar, Heliopolis, Egypt

Angel Cuniberti, Apostolic Vicar of Florencia, Colombia

Severino Mariano de Aguiar, Bishop of Pesqueira, Brazil

Franjo Franič, Bishop of Split, Yugoslavia

Francisco Austregesilo de Mesquita, Bishop of Afogados de Ingazeira, Pernambuco, Brazil

10. [Manifesto of the bishops of the north-east of Brazil, Recife, 14 July 1966. — Ed.]

Grégoire Haddad, Melchite Auxiliary Bishop of Beirut,
Lebanon

Manuel Pereira da Costa, Bishop of Campiña Grande, Brazil

Charles Van Meckebeke, Bishop of Ning Hsia (China), Apostolic visitor in Singapore

Antonio Batista Fragoso, Bishop of Crateus, Brazil

Étienne Loosdregt, Bishop of Vientiane, Laos

Jacques-Grent, Bishop of Tual, Maluku, Indonesia

David Picao, Bishop of Santos, Brazil

Appendix C: Latin America: Lands of Violence*

As priests from various Latin-American countries, anxious about the situation in which the majority of the population of Latin America struggles to survive and preoccupied by the position taken by our church in face of this situation, we address ourselves, with filial respect, to the clergy of Latin America. It is our wish to explain our anxiety and to make you participate in our preoccupation.

Every day talk about violence in Latin America increases. Many worry about it. Some are terrified by it. As for us, we want to face it as pastors of the people of God and ministers of the gospel of love, who try to interpret 'the signs of the times'.

From this perspective we feel obliged to affirm to our bishops and eventually to the whole world the fundamental conclusion of our pastoral reflection: *For centuries, Latin America has been a region of violence.* We are talking of the violence that a privileged minority has been using, since the colonial period, to exploit the vast majority of the people. We are talking of the violence of hunger, of helplessness, of underdevelopment. We are talking of the violence of persecution, of oppression, and of ignorance. We are talking of the violence of organized prostitution, of illegal but existing

* [Written on 20 June 1968 by a working committee of the Latin-American episcopate, signed by 920 Catholic clergymen (400 from Argentina, 200 from Brazil, 120 from Peru, 100 from Uruguay, 50 from Bolivia, and 50 from other Latin-American countries) and submitted to the Second Conference of the Latin-American Episcopate (CELAM) held in Medellín, Colombia, in August 1968. Printed in *Signos de Revolución*, Lima, Comisión Episcopal de Acción Social, 1969, pp. 103-6. — Ed.]

slavery, of social, intellectual, and economic discrimination.

Latin America is truly an area of violence because there are in it huge areas where the inhabitants' daily caloric intake is between 1,500 and 2,000; what is considered normal for the development of human life is 2,800 to 3,000 calories. There are huge areas where 70 per cent of the children suffer from malnutrition and undernutrition and all the physical, psychological, and intellectual consequences thereof.

The reality of Latin America's economic situation is no less irritating, especially if one compares it to other regions. The degree of development can be partly measured by the fact that our per capita income barely reaches \$300 (US) a year, without ignoring the differences existing among the various countries and among the various social groups in each country. This is equivalent to one third of the average European and one seventh of the average North American income. What is more, the rate of growth is so small that only in forty-five years will we reach Europe's current level.¹

This same violence manifests itself in education, housing, politics, and even religion. 'Fifty per cent of Latin America's population is illiterate, not counting the functional illiterates among adults.'² The marginal urban population 'fills whole neighbourhoods around every city, and these neighbourhoods are built out of discarded materials. The low standard of living, the lack of sanitary facilities, the overcrowding, and the size of the huts make life in these neighbourhoods inhuman. Others live on top of each other in slums in the old sections of the cities.'³ The report continues its observations of Latin-American life:

... democracy is more formal than real, with, on occasions, a total lack of the liberty to organize. The political system can be variously characterized as oligarchical ... In many countries the

1. *Basic Preliminary Document*, Second Conference of the Latin-American Episcopate, MS, p. 4.

2. *ibid.*, p. 7.

3. *ibid.*, p. 5.

military holds decisive power ... The Catholic church has been affected by this political hypertrophy. In countries where it is the official religion, its religious leaders are identified with the political power. Elsewhere, they seem to be allied to the ruling and powerful classes. The church also constitutes a power and, unfortunately, it is too often silent in face of the abuse of the civilian and military rulers.⁴

We call all this violence because it is not the fatal and inevitable consequence of a technically insoluble problem but the unjust result of a situation voluntarily maintained.

We are continually more aware that the causes for mankind's great problems, which plague Latin America, are to be found, fundamentally, in the political, economic, and social system operating in our countries. This system is based on 'profit as the essential motor for economic progress, competence as the supreme law of economics, private property in the means of production as an absolute right', which Paul VI denounces in *Populorum progressio*.

It is this system which permits the trampling advance of 'the international imperialism of money' (*Populorum progressio*) which directly or indirectly seizes our countries and impedes an authentic regional development. This imperialism makes itself more powerful every day, as it uses our cheap labour to implant in our countries its industries or as it sucks our natural wealth by 'buying Latin America's raw materials at low prices and selling it manufactured products necessary for development at constantly higher prices'.⁵ This same imperialism then tries to fool our people by pretending that the money it lets us have as benevolent 'loans' is something other than a way of negotiating [our domination] on an international level.

It is the system which each year bleeds the national budgets of our countries by appropriating huge sums for useless military expeditions to defend the interests of privileged

4. *ibid.*, p. 10.

5. *ibid.*, p. 5.

minorities, while our people remain hungry, ignorant, and isolated because 'the means are not available' to build industries, schools, or roads.

All this is but a timid sketch of the panorama of the state of violence caused by the economic, political, social, and cultural structures of power, be they national or international, which try to dominate our people.

But, for some time now, a new factor has been introduced into this panorama of misery and injustice. Our people are rapidly becoming aware of their exploited conditions and of the real possibilities of liberating themselves. For many, this liberation is impossible without a fundamental change in the socio-economic structures of our continent. Not a few consider all possibilities of achieving this change through pacifistic means exhausted.

Because the privileged minorities resort to full repression to stop this process of liberation, many people see no other solution than the use of force by the people. To such a conclusion many Christian militants who reflect sincerely on their lives in the light of the gospel also agree.

We, ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who have been placed by our priestly mission amidst the people to proclaim the word of truth and justice, we feel obliged to interpret this panorama in the light of Christian revelation.

The light permits us to see clearly that we cannot condemn an oppressed people when it finds itself obliged to use force to liberate itself; otherwise, we would commit a new injustice upon the people. Should such condemnation come out of the Latin-American church, it would appear once again as an 'opium of the people', at the service of those who, for centuries, have practised the violence of exploitation and oppression, which has produced hunger, ignorance, and misery. Furthermore, it would be an impossible task to try to understand a church which contradicted itself by condemning now the violence of those who seek to liberate themselves from an unjust system when it continues to pay homage to the heroes of our political independence from

Spain, which was certainly not achieved by non-violent means.

We believe it is not the business of the ecclesiastical hierarchy as such to determine the technical means by which a temporal problem is to be solved most efficiently and effectively. But it must also not try to hamper men, Christian or not, from attaining their most ample freedom, in accord with the evangelical principles of fraternity and justice.

We also do not believe that the hierarchy should decide by what concrete means the radical change in human structures should be accomplished. We do believe, however, that part of its mission is precisely to denounce prophetically that which makes such a change necessary. On the other hand, not opposing the violence of the oppressors is equivalent to provoking indirectly the legitimate violence of the oppressed.

These facts and reflections move us to ask, respectfully and confidently, that our clergymen united in this assembly: (1) should not, in considering the problem of violence in Latin America, under any circumstance whatsoever compare or confuse the *unjust violence* of the oppressors, who maintain this odious system, with the *just violence* of the oppressed, who find themselves forced to use it to gain their liberation; (2) denounce with absolute clarity and no ambiguity the state of violence imposed by the powerful – be they individuals, groups, or nations – on the people of our region for centuries and proclaim the right of legitimate defence of the people; (3) exhort all Christians of Latin America, clearly and firmly, to work for everything that contributes to the real liberation of man in this area and to the establishment of a just and fraternal society in which all men will work together in good will; (4) assure all Christians a large measure of freedom in choosing the means best able to achieve this liberation and to create this society.

We do not intend, with this, to present ourselves as advocates of indiscriminate violence. On the contrary, we lament and are anguished by the fact that force must be used to establish justice. Nevertheless, we are moved by the necessity

to accept the grave responsibility which the hour demands of us.

We are also trying not to idealize violence but to give a new dimension to the principle, repeatedly recognized, of the right of every unjustly oppressed community to react, even violently, against an unjust aggressor. The aggression we denounce is that of the oppressive structures which block the integral and harmonious development of a great part of our population and which resist, silently but efficiently, all forms of 'audacious and profoundly innovating transformations' (*Populorum progressio*, No. 32).

With the hope that we will be heard and with the wish to have contributed to the work which you are undertaking, we salute you with filial respect for our Lord.

[Signatures of 920 Latin-American priests]

Appendix D: A Letter to Christians: Violence, Revolution, and Morality

by John Gerassi*

Be he in Prague or in Pittsburgh, every true progressive reformer, yes, even every genuine revolutionary, affirms one basic proposition: that violence begets violence. Ideally, he would like to establish justice in the world through reason. Yet the twentieth century, both quantitatively and qualitatively, is the most violent of all centuries.

What few reformers seem to understand, however, is that such violence is precisely the result of reason. Moreover, it is this lack of understanding, I believe, that has led to the many defeats of what I would call positive violence and facilitated the victories of negative violence. In other words, because the reformer shuns violence as anti-human and anti-rational, he has abandoned the revolutionary to go it alone. The consequence has been to strengthen the oppressors. Let me explain.

Historically, progress has always come about through violence. Christ, as He said, came to bring His people a sword. Perhaps the long-range consequence of His teaching was a new religion, which, in theory at least, advocates peace and good will towards men; but, in its historical impact, Christianity destroyed the oppression of imperial Rome. More important, Christ's message was that man cannot live alone with himself, that he is a collective being whose joy and self-satisfaction – not just his place in heaven but his fulfilment on earth – are conditioned by his relationship to his fellow men. Christ, then, was an advocate of moral incentives. And

* Adapted from John Gerassi, 'Violence, Revolution, and Morality', *Perspective* (Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary), Spring 1969, pp. 49–64.

the reason He was put down violently – and the reason the early Christians fought back violently (for is not giving up one's body to lions a violent act, especially when that body belongs not to the individual but to the collective?) – was precisely because the society of the day was based not on collective communion but on individual greed, which Christianity threatened.

Collectivism (or brotherhood to Christians) does not spring up by itself. Nor, in my view, does faith or love. Both need effort, an effort which, to professional logicians, may appear irrational, but an effort nonetheless. As such, both faith and love are violent. Love, for example, entails the destruction of individual, egocentric will to build dual or common consciousness. Brotherhood reflects the same violence in the destruction of master–slave relationship to establish collectivism. And that is what every revolution is about.

The rationale for revolutions – be they Christian, nationalist, Communist, or whatever – may not always have been that they were for anything. Usually, in fact, they were against something. But that is because the spontaneous rejection of an established order or structure is at first motivated by anger, frustration, injustice, or inequality, which are all negative. Implied in all these feelings, however, is very obviously the moral imperatives that all men are created equal and that society must be just for all. Thus, every revolutionary, as negative as his motives may appear, is in fact a moralist, an absolutist, and a collectivist. What he believes is good for him he really posits as a universal good for all.

That, naturally, does not make his cause necessarily just or good. But the old cliché that a revolutionary or his cause is only as good as his methods is surely not relevant. For what makes him explode is an injustice that suffocates him, like a plastic bag over his head that he must quickly burst open before he runs out of air. Spartacus, for example, wanted to put an end to slavery and killing and had to do it fast lest he himself die in the gladiators' ring. To succeed, he had to kill those bent on killing him. Robespierre hoped to eliminate

political injustice completely and, to do so, felt he had to eliminate all the unjust. Lenin and Trotsky, bent on eradicating what they felt was the real cause of injustice – economic exploitation – thought themselves compelled to do away with all those strong enough to perpetuate it and, in so doing, set up the framework by which arbitrary elimination could be carried out by their successor, Stalin. Yet, for all their faults, who would say that the world is not better off today as a result? Only one who has never been a slave could condemn Spartacus. Only one who has never been politically irrelevant could condemn Robespierre. Only one who has never been hungry could condemn Lenin.

It is clear to me, then, that the world is progressing socially – perhaps ever so slowly, but progressing just the same. And social progress is the direct result of violent confrontations. Of course, we do have our mass executions: our Hiroshimas, our Nagasakis, our Vietnams. But, in proportion to our advances, these are no worse than the Thirty Years' War, or the crusades, or the plagues. What's more, every time a bastion of injustice is about to fall, it uses all its energy to forestall the inevitable. Such is the instinct of survival, either in individuals or in their institutions.

This has been true in the past. It is true now. And to the world at large, especially to the Third World, to the ghettos of America, to the unemployed or underemployed Chicanos of New Mexico, the bastion of injustice is the United States. Thus, people resort to more violence than ever before, and thus, too, the revolutionaries who must try to bring it down use more counterviolence than ever before. And there will be more, much more.

To those of us living fairly comfortably in this period, it may seem a waste and a tragedy. Therefore, we tend to talk about 'not by bread alone' and insist that salvation is a personal act. But such arguments are mere 'cop-outs'. The Bolivian peasant who can only feed a bowl of rice a day to three of his four children because he simply does not have enough for the fourth ('who's the weakest anyway and is

bound to die first', as one told me) is not interested in his soul or in yours. To him, the cola salesman, who can afford a swimming pool, two cars, and hunting dogs eating more meat a day than the peasant's family in a year, is a criminal. And so he is. It is the peasant's right, by every law of nature and of morality, to take away the salesman's wealth – by killing him if necessary. To accumulate such surpluses, the salesman must use violence, negative violence, the violence of depriving others, the violence of conspicuous consumption, the violence of apathy. In destroying him, the peasant is perhaps objectively guilty of violence too – the violence of envy. But it is a positive violence, or a counter-violence. For, implicit in his act is his belief in brotherhood, in equality, in justice for all.

Today the peasant more and more identifies the source of all violence and injustice with the United States. Quite rightly so. I do not think it is necessary for me to trace here the history of United States economic, military, diplomatic, and cultural imperialism in Latin America, Asia, or Africa. I have done so elsewhere.¹ It is enough for me to point out that United States corporations today own or control 85 per cent of the main sources of wealth in Latin America; that almost no Alliance for Progress funds ever reach the lower echelons of society; that, proportionally, the people of Latin America are worse off today than ten and twenty years ago; that fewer have potable water, less are literate, more go hungry every day than ever before; that more money is taken out of the area than brought in by the United States and its local partners; and that political rigidity and military oppression are stronger now than ever before. Finally, let me add that the United States not only controls Latin America's internal markets (which is why it favours common markets there) but also its financial markets, thus holding virtual dictatorial power over social progress and non-profit-

1. See John Gerassi, *The Great Fear in Latin America*, New York, Macmillan, 1965; and idem, *Latin American Radicalism*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1969.

able development (which is one reason why no meaningful agrarian reforms have ever been carried out except by revolutionary governments).

These facts, which I ask the reader to verify elsewhere, describe acts of violence. When one learns that the average life span of a Brazilian peasant from the north-east is limited to twenty-eight (men) or thirty-two years (women), one must be outraged. When one further learns that each time the United States sends a rocket to the moon, it spends the equivalent of a fully staffed, one-room school for every city of 50,000 or more, one must be even more enraged. And when one realizes that no such shot to the moon could be possible without the raw materials that the United States brings in from Latin America, one should be downright rebellious. This amounts to violence to an extent beyond normal comprehension. Put together, one could logically infer that the United States is responsible for the unnatural or premature deaths of a hundred million people every year on this planet. This is all because the United States, the strongest and richest nation on earth, is committed to 'democracy', which it defines as free enterprise.

The same sort of argument can be made against capitalist America at home – in the ghettos, in Appalachia, in the Mexican-American south-west. It is surely not the blacks who are violent but the Establishment. The liberal argument, that when a black man steals he is simply defending himself but when he sits on a rooftop and calmly snipes away at a white cop he is committing a reprehensible act of violence, is too easy and too pat. Primitive self-defence is against an immediate, visible aggressor. But social self-defence is against institutions; its manifestation sometimes, indeed most of the time, takes the form of direct warfare against the institutions' representatives. The Vietnamese, for example, know full well that it is the American political and economic system which is their enemy, not the hapless GI who is sent to fight him in the jungles and deltas. Yet the Vietnamese are forced to fight the GI because they cannot fight the system

itself. Likewise, the blacks know very well (at least the black militant leaders do) that it is that same system which is *their* enemy. But they too must fight its defenders, the local police. In both cases, the violence used is counter-violence, and that the individual policeman was just innocently walking his beat is fundamentally irrelevant, as it is irrelevant to the Bolivian peasant that the cola salesman may have made his money on the South African stock market.

But not all violence, liberals say, is the result of material needs or greed. They are perfectly willing to admit that just as the factory owner who locks out his employees is committing an act of violence, so are United States businessmen who profit from the misery of peasants and blacks. But, the liberals go on, that is not the argument in America in 1969. Most of the violence is directed by those who do not lack basic necessities, by those who, on the contrary, have everything they need, by the New Left youths who are too impatient with the system and want to overthrow it. In so doing, they destroy private property, hurt innocent bystanders, and even resort to sabotage and terrorism. In the process they are setting up new values which carry with them a basic disrespect not only for law and order but also for the worth of individual men. How, then, can a new, better society, based on equality and brotherhood, evolve from their struggle?

First of all, one does not need to be personally hungry in order to consider hunger an outrage. Did not Christ die on the cross for all men? Secondly, one can become aware of why one is well-off and object to it. It is a sign of maturity, not impurity, to realize that by abandoning one's wealth one is committing an act of individual charity. When I was a child, my mother always scolded me for leaving food on my plate: 'How can you waste all that when millions of children all over the world could be saved if they had it?' For a while I reacted by eating it, even though I was not hungry any more. Somehow, by doing so I was saving millions of children's lives. Then, as I became a bit older, I reacted by telling my mother, 'Well, send it to them.' Even if she could, of

course, that would not have helped. But it did help me; she stopped insisting that I eat everything on my plate.

Finally, it occurred to me that even if all mothers in America did send their surpluses to India and places like that, it still would not help. After all, that is what the United States is doing with Food for Peace, and few have survived by it (though the middlemen involved have gotten rich). The answer, obviously, is a system where men have a right to all their basic necessities, an impossible feat with free enterprise.

More profoundly, however, what annoys the New Left is that it knows that no one *needs* to go hungry, that it is precisely institutionalized greed which keeps so many millions hungry. The New Left understands that our system, based on profits, must by necessity exploit some to make others rich, and that this exploitation leads inevitably to Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, the Congo, South Africa, Indonesia, Watts, Detroit, the assassination of Martin Luther King. Free enterprise, where each is left to his own devices within broad limits, makes a commodity of health, education, housing, and food. Either because they feel guilty (accepting the responsibility of the Bolivian peasant child's death, which the cola company refuses) or because they are idealistic (that is, absolutist and romantic, believing that heaven is possible on earth or that at least it should be worked for), youths of the New Left want no part of this system. And like the Vietnamese who must fight the police, the New Leftists feel they must fight the electoral democrat, the police, the teacher-administrator, whatever and whoever supports or represents the system in their daily lives.

But that is not the only reason why they resort to violence. They are not merely altruistic. They are also violent out of self-defence. They also feel the suffocation of the system. They also have to break the plastic bag and let in the air. And on them, too, is that system clamped on. For them, too, the system is violent. And their rebellion, too, is an act of counter-violence. The only difference is that their suffocation is spiritual, not physical. The air they must breathe is, pre-

cisely because they are middle-class, the air of 'not by bread alone'. Hence the New Left rebellion is a middle-class rebellion. But that does not make it any less real or any less serious.

While the older middle class, our parents, may no longer fear losing their hard-won possessions, they may also feel that something is wrong with our value system. But deep inside them is the spectre of our Great Depression. To really 'rock the boat' is to put into jeopardy all their possessions – the television sets and cars, the vacations abroad, the golf and pottery lessons. The new generation is simply not haunted by such apprehensions. For one thing the Depression did not directly affect today's youths; it is only an historical fact to them with no particular relevance except in the abstract (and there only to the educated youths). Furthermore, they have grown up in families which did not suffer privation yet which seem no happier or more generous than other families. Ask any of today's youths what life at home was like and you will hear a long catalogue of nasty scenes, family quarrels, tensions, jealousies, infidelities, and so on.

Contrary to the liberals' contention, this does not prove that man is selfish by nature: what it does prove is that our system is such that it forces man to compete constantly with his fellow man. That makes him want to get the better of everyone else – constantly. It affects his drive as well. If he has one thousand, he wants two; if he has one million, he seeks two. If the country dominates one continent, it lusts for two. In the process, men, women, and children become just as much commodities as cars and television sets, as medicine and education. What parent really cares if his child is truly happy? What parent does not care if that child does not do well at school? Our society respects only achievements, and no one is supposed to feel sorry for the achiever if his price was anxiety attacks, ulcers, insomnia, and the rest.

The young do care. To them it simply is not worth it. After they rejected (and they are rejecting it more and more) the cult of possessions, their first impulse was to drop out of society. Thousands did, living in communes very cheaply,

working only for necessities and quitting when they had necessities, borrowing clothes from each other, and laughing at the rest of the people who never found the time to look at flowers or the sea or each other. Those who continued to go to schools and universities adapted a rejection of their parents' values to that environment. Behaviourist psychology became a joke; logical positivism and semantical philosophies, mental masturbation; political science, propaganda. Why should our schools teach us how great we are, how noble is our history, and how marvellous is our economic system, when our greatness has led to L.B.J.s and Vietnams and Wattses? Of course, some decided to look further into the questions rather than the answers, and they found that we are not great, that our history has been stained with blood from the beginning (from 1882 to 1959, for example, no less than 2,595 blacks were reported lynched, and thousands more were unreported, without a single conviction), that our economic system is laden with injustice. Finally, it became clear that the whole educational process is geared to strengthening our system. Why do so many universities have a business school, but none have a labour school? Why are there no courses on American imperialism? Why is Marxism taught only by non-Marxists? Why does 'open campus' mean letting the CIA and Dow Chemical and USIA come to recruit?

As fast as the questions were posed, answers came. The university system turned out to be a major accomplice in the wars, the war research, the oppressions. No wonder, then, that the government has always allowed students to be deferred from the draft. Their role in the industrial-military complex was much more important on the campus than on the battlefield. Thus, it became obvious that education in America, too, was violent. Its main function was to train young men to become cogs, petty Eichmanns, in the grand design. Of course, the process was sophisticated. A military automaton ordered to do or die just would not fit into the genteel atmosphere of academia. So, at all costs, one must maintain the myth of academic freedom – to talk but not act

according to one's conviction. And to safeguard against the possibility of anyone challenging the whole academic system, there was always that other great liberal myth, the importance of specialization. As long as a historian did not feel responsible for what went on in the chemistry lab, he could sign petitions against the war in Vietnam and defend the institution for allowing him that freedom.

Well, the farce did not work for the younger generation. As the youths began to challenge each part of the educational system, they realized that they had to confront the whole as well. If the university is meant to give them an education, why do they not have a voice in the curriculum, in university policy, in tenure committees, in administrative decisions? Ah, decisions! Why, they asked, do they never have a say in any decisions? Thus, they began to demand participation in making decisions.

This questioning led them to the inevitable conclusion that the university was a microcosm of society at large. Who, in America, does make decisions? Not the young, not the workers, not the middle class, not even the run-of-the-mill technocrats or bureaucrats. Only those who own the means of production and their managers: the regents, the boards, the chairmen, the advisers, the 'Johnsons' – the power élite which either incorporates and includes all the powerful or crushes the dissidents. Where then are Galbraith's famous 'countervailing forces'?² Another farce!

America, concluded its young, is a dictatorship. It is a closed society. It is an oppressive society. It is a violent society. There is no pluralism in America – another liberal myth. The AFL-CIO works hand in hand with the CIA, the CIA with GM, GM with NASA, NASA with the University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley with the farming industry, the farming industry with the Department of the Interior, the Department of the Interior with the AFL-CIO. Everybody talks about free speech, free press, and free assembly, but the

2. See John Kenneth Galbraith, *American Capitalism: The Concept of Countervailing Power*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1952.

American people are fed only that part of freedom which reinforces the myth, through media which are controlled by the boards, the chairmen, and the powerful.

The power élite is intelligent, however. Usually, except when the dissenters really become a threat (in which case, the leaders are raided at home, and marijuana is 'found' in their rooms), they are incorporated into the system. Either they are offered good jobs, are bought by War on Poverty funds, or are allowed to hold their rallies which convinces everyone (almost) what a wonderfully free country America is. But never are the dissenters allowed to participate in policy-making. Except, of course, every four years, at election time!

To the young, that, too, is now clearly a farce. The American electoral process has never proven such a joke as in 1968. Although the majority of Republicans favoured Rockefeller and the majority of Democrats supported a McCarthy-Kennedy-McGovern type of candidate, they got Nixon and Humphrey, twiddledee and twiddledum. But even that election only showed up the most glaring aspect of American undemocracy. What difference would it have made had Kennedy or Rockefeller been the next President? Would either have worked for the destruction of our competitive society so as to replace it with a moral community? Even if either had pulled us out of Vietnam, would he not have intervened in Thailand? in Venezuela? in Guatemala? in the Congo? Would either have ignored the cries of Creole Corporation (a Rockefeller company) when the Venezuelans nationalized the oil there? Would either have ignored the pleas of United Fruit in Guatemala or in the Dominican Republic? Would GM stand for workers' control, decentralization, safe cars? Would the oil oligopolies accept cars which do not pollute because they do not run on gas? Each of these questions and their obvious answers form part of the American electoral system. Thus American 'democracy' with its 'free' speech and 'free' press is part and parcel of American society, a society based on greed, competition, oppressions and, increasingly, more evidently, on murder, invasion, and

occupation. It must be stopped precisely because of its inherent violence. It must be destroyed. And the only way to do that is by smashing it through counter-violence.

As much as counter-violence may be tactically necessary to stop official violence, so too is it psychologically crucial. As Frantz Fanon said about colonized man, violence is a liberating force. After carefully observing the people of his native Martinique, of his adopted Algeria, and of black Africa, Fanon concluded, quite correctly I think, that the process of colonialization is not just military, political, or economic domination by a foreign country; it is psychological and cultural oppression by that country as well. Thus, he insisted, if the Third World is to throw off the colonizer, it must free itself from the colonized spirit, characterized by defeatism, servility, inferiority, and 'Uncle Tomness'. The only way for a colonized man to do so is to prove to himself that he is a man, that he can face the colonizer without fear, that he is fully capable of running his own life and his own society. In other words, the only way he can be free is to take his country and not to accept it as a gift. He must reconquer **that which is his.**³

Likewise, in the United States, I think it is quite clear that the only way the new generation can free itself from the bondage of its elders, their value system, their cultural oppression – their television and newspapers and publicity campaigns and educational consensus – is to seize the controls of the state's cultural apparatus. The young must then run it, must make the mistakes which will lead them to a better understanding of its functioning, doing with it whatever suits them, for it is theirs by right and not by charity.

To a certain extent the youths are already fashioning their new society through their own medium, the underground press. They have done so without violence, by working hard and putting together the *Berkeley Barb*, the *New York R.A.T.*, the various 'Free Presses', and psychedelic papers.

3. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York, Grove Press, 1968.

Generally, however, these papers are owned by one 'sugar daddy' who usually keeps a tight control on editorial policy. What is more, they do not represent genuine free expression but rebellion. Free expression remains impossible until the system itself allows and encourages it, and that will not be possible under profit-motivated and profit-oriented capitalism.

Besides, the exposure of this medium, as extensive as it may be in some places (the Los Angeles *Free Press* has a circulation of 250,000), is nowhere comparable to the official bombardments through television and the established press. So, while there is no denying the importance of America's current underground, such acts as the forcible seizure of New York's Channel 13 by a Lower East Side anarchistic SDS group (known as 'Up Against the Wall, Mother-fuckers') are of primary necessity. Such acts, violent all, must continue until Walter Cronkite is replaced by Tom Hayden and David Brinkley and Chet Huntley are superseded by Yippie leaders Jerry Rubin and Abby Hoffman.

What I am talking about is not just a change of guards but a change of attitudes, of value systems, of human relationships. This remains impossible until our bureaucratic masters are literally thrown out and replaced by those whose leadership role is constantly dependent upon their ability to relate to those for whom ability to relate to one another is more important than possessions and achievements. That kind of reconstructing of society is by necessity violent, for it confronts the imperialistic society which is now established and which will use every last vestige of violence available to it to maintain its hegemony.

The confrontation itself, however, is also important for breaking through those old values we have inherited from our elders. At Oakland's Stop-the-Draft Week and during the Chicago Convention battles, a profound change of attitude took place among the street people. The struggle was, as Fanon predicted, liberating. Middle-class youths not only got over their 'private-property bag' (as they smashed windows and slashed police car tyres), but they also learned, without

speeches, the meaning of solidarity. In such battles all rebels are equals. Leaders become leaders only by their acts and only if those acts relate to the rebels' consciousness. That itself is the root of true democracy, what we now call 'participatory democracy'. The exhilaration that comes with street fighting is not, as Establishment (that is, adaptation-oriented) psychiatrists insist, escapism, parental rejectionism, masochism, and sadism. On the contrary, it is achieving selfhood, independence, the feeling that one is a man, taking pride in oneself and one's comrades. It is, just as Fanon said, an act of growing up, not of adolescent nihilism.⁴

The struggle itself, then, not only frees the combatant from the straps of his heritage, it also teaches him new values. Solidarity, for example, is only a word until one relies on it. Then, it becomes part of one's life. Without solidarity, the street fighters would soon be isolated and crushed. And solidarity is a prerequisite of brotherhood (or collectivism) which is the only hope we have for saving mankind. Thus, out of the violence comes genuine peace; out of it comes our future.

And so, when liberals say that they sympathize with the new generation's anger, frustration, and rejection of old values but insist that they must know what its ultimate positive goals are before they will support them, they show a complete lack of understanding of the struggle. Like all revolutions, America's middle-class revolt will elucidate goals as the struggle ensues. What will replace this society is anyone's guess right now, but it has to be better precisely because, in the fight to destroy it, the participants are learning, amidst all the internal squabbling, to love each other.

This is not to say that some general hints are not already clear. From what is most hated can be deduced what is basic. First of all, we must somehow find a way to decentralize our technological society. No man will ever be at peace again unless he has a real sense of participating in the decisions that affect his daily life and the lives of his neighbours and com-

4. *ibid.*, pp. 94-5.

rades. This may entail destroying the whole technological base. It may mean getting rid of all cars and planting trees in the middle of Fifth Avenue. It may lead to community control of factories and institutions which in turn would require setting up 10,000 tiny GM plants in 10,000 different localities, each putting out no more than a hundred cars a year. The cost of such decentralization would be so astronomical, compared to the present setup, that such a reconstruction is incomprehensible in current terms. Only a society totally cleansed of profit motives could allow it.

This new society may be impossible to achieve until the whole world has got rid of its material incentives and replaced them with moral ones. Today, Cuba, for example, can only apply moral incentives to industries which produce goods that are valuable only in Cuba. When such goods have to be competitive on the international market, Cuba's planners cannot afford to buy raw materials from the socialist country the people prefer; they buy from the cheaper source. Yet Cuba is, slowly and gradually, changing its society to work and thrive and satisfy itself by moral gains. That is why the New Left members who travel to Cuba come home with 'their minds blown', as they say. Where else can they visit huge state farms where everyone works as hard as they can, where everyone takes only what he or she needs from unguarded state stores, and where no money is used at all.

What America's older generation does not seem able to understand is that the adjectives 'romantic' and 'utopian', referring to these youths, are factual description, not ridicule. These people *are* romantic: they have hope and faith, and they work at that faith. Unlike their elders, they have not bungled their affairs, laden themselves with follies, crushed their imagination, ruined their sense of human pride. Furthermore, history is on their side. For what slave owner ever thought slavery would end before the first slaves rebelled? What aristocrat ever expected his feudal system to collapse before its first crack appeared? What capitalist ever dreamed

that his exploitation might be checked until he met a man he could not buy?

The world has progressed, and it will continue to do so despite the prophets of doom, despite the cynical pragmatists, despite the mass psychologists who keep insisting that human nature does not change. Today's youths know, perhaps only instinctively, that there is no such thing as human nature. Man has two eyes, two legs and one nose. He is born helpless, and he is helpless before death. But he is condemned neither to suffer nor to cry. He is not forced to hate by God, but by other men. He can be gentle or cruel; it is society that makes him that way, and society is man-made.

What is man-made can be destroyed by man. Our society – better than those of the past – has run its course. A new one must replace it. A new one will replace it. It will be done through violence, because those who will build the new society must use violence to destroy the old. Those who destroy today will be building tomorrow, or in twenty years. By destroying today, they will learn better how to build tomorrow. In politics, we call them 'the vanguard'. In ethics, they call them 'the moralists'. In religion, you call them 'God's children'.

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