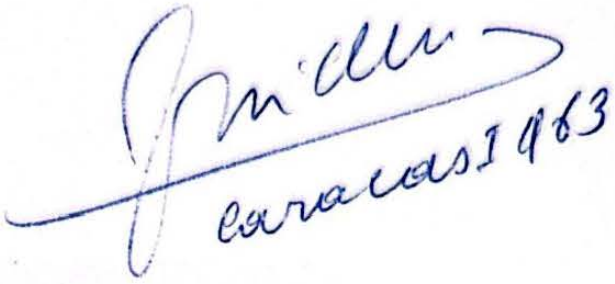
# LATIN AMERICA

# Crucial Test for Christian Civilization

By

Dr. Rafael Caldera



Center for Christian Democratic Action
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**DR. RAFAEL CALDERA,** from Venezuela, 45, Doctor of Science and Jurisprudence, is Secretary General of the Christian Democratic Party (COPEI) of Venezuela.

He has been in politics for many years: he led a student group (UNE) a the university, and was a Deputy at 25. He was a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic in 1958, running against present President Rómulo Betancourt and Rear Admiral Wolfgang Larrazábal.

COPEI has lent valuable cooperation to Betancourt toward the maintenance of the democratic system in Venezuela. The majority in the Chamber of Deputies is formed by the coalition of Democratic Action (President Betancourt's Party) and COPEI (Christian Democratic Party, led by Caldera), COPEI now holds the Ministries of Development, Agriculture and Justice, and 6 of the 23 state governorships.

**Dr. Caldera** has been a Professor of Labor Law and Sociology at the Central University of Venezuela for 19 years, and at the Catholic University since its foundation. He is author of an important work on Labor Law which is used the Labor Law of Venezuela. He was a representative of the International Labor Office, and attended the international Labor Conference as chief of the Venezuelan delegation, where he was designated, in 1958, chief of the Government Delegates Group of all the nations represented at the Conference.

Dr. Caldera has also received numerous distinctions from Latin American universities, including Lima, Quito, Bogotá, and others; he is an honoary Profesor at the Venezuelan Universities of Zulia (Maracaibo) and the Andes (Mérida). He has published numerous books and pamphlets, and his political speeches have attracted much attention and comment. He is acknowledged as a major influence in the parliamentary and politicial life of Venezuela.

# LATIN AMERICA, CRUCIAL TEST FOR CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

**Address by Dr. Rafael Caldera, Secretary General of the Christian Democratic Party of Venezuela (COPEI); Professor at the Central University of Venezuela and at the Andres Bello Catholic University; at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., June 27, 1962.**

In only thirty years more, five centuries will have elapsed since a sailor whose place of birth is still in dispute, searching a passage to India, arrived at an island in the Caribbean. Six years later he set foot on the Continent (Tierra Firme); and a unique process of colonization spread throughout the Hemisphere the seed of Christian Civilization. It appears that now, almost 500 years since the first trip of Columbus, is the time that the largest part of the same hemisphere is beginning to be discovered once more: that which, colonized by Europeans of Latin origin and blended with the primitive inhabitants and with inmmigrants brought by force from Africa answer to the common name of Latin America.

Reason of circumstance have provoked this new discovery, which for the countries of the North Alantic Treaty Organization has meant a true revelation. The presence in one of the nations of the Latin American community of a regime that has placed its destinies within the orbit of the Soviet Union has contributed to hasten that discovery, which was already overdue and which has succeeded in putinng in bold relief how far the survival of western civilization depends upon the completion of the work demanded urgently by the peoples of Latin America.

At the beginning of the century, the population of the United States exceeded by 25% the total population of the Latin American countries. In the 1960's, the inhabitants of Latin America were 10% more than those of the United States. And while the demographic increase of the great northern country only reaches 18 per thousand, the rate of ve-

getative growth of the peoples, situated from the Rio Grande to Cape Horn is 25 per thousand, rising in some of them, such as Venezuela and Costa Rica, to more than 40 per thousand. This represents an increase each year of live million Latin Americans through the single force of the power of expansion of human nature; five millions who must be fed, for whom it is necessary to provide primary schools at the age of seven; five million human beings who demand a million housing units, in addition to those that must be built for those who now demand in a very brief time the additional training of 120 thousand teachers per year, assuming that each teacher is put in charge of forty children and not twenty-five, as advised by educational authorities; and so as not to prolong indefinitely the list of consequences that will follow, it suffices to point out that within eighteen years there will be an annual need for not less than two million and a half new jobs, in addition to those that are needed today and those that will have to be created at once, in accordance with the growing needs of the present time.

The recognition of human rights constitutes one of the most significant conquests of our time. The generalization and stabilization of the the system of demoratic government, which resides in the will of the majority of the people, is one of the most deeply felt aspirations in the world today. The Second World War left, along with its great lot of sufferings, these two basic conquets: 1) in an interdependent world, which can no longer deny its unity, rights inherent to the dignity of human condition were proclaimed for all men; and 2) it was reaffirmed that the concurrent wills of the majority remain the only force capable of lending legitimacy to government providing thus the best and most effective instrument for ensuring human rights.

The peoples of Latin America are struggling today, with vigorous determination, for the sincere accomplishment of these two conquests development of natural circumstance (which sometimes obstruct, rather than favor, progress toward these objectives), these people are demanding earnestly a revolutionary change in order to foward the stages of development, and obtaining from the economic and social processes their proper end, which is no other than human well-being.

Revolution, I have said. And this word, which quite often has been

synonymous with bloodshed and destruction, must be understood as the acceleration of history, of which Hanlevy spoke; as the breaking with that part of the past that does not favor accomplishment of social aims and the adoption of those measures and systems that are capable of bringing about the Christian idea of life.

The truth, which must be clearly told —authough it is necessary to face the anguish that it may bear is that if Christian Civilization does not show itself capable of fulfilling this noble and urgent historic duty, people will seek other roads, even those lined with lies and giving not what they offer, but raher oppression and despair.

And as Western Civilization, threatened by communist imperialism, is resting for its defense upon the military, economic and political power of this hemisphere, it is now beginning to be seen something that is not a figure of speech but a palpitating reality; that is, that the loss of Christian values in Latin America would bring the inevitable downfall of Christian civilization under totalitarianism menacing from the East.

In order to gauge the tremendous importance that Latin America has at this moment fo the fate of mankind is it necessary to understand it. Many false ideas have gained acceptance wih regard to it, and it is easier to underrate and severly criticize Latin America than to understand and assist it. It has been customary to consider Latin Americans as incapable people, to assign as the cause of their backwardness their laziness and ignorance; and frequently those who do not wish to understand us, and who even today refuse to cooperate with us, show studied surprise and ask with apparent frankness how it is possible for such rich countries to have been unable to defeat proverty.

The answer is not simple, but it is based upon objective data. And it is essential that the approach toward us be made with a desire to see this reality and a view to helping us overcome difficulties. Neither a cold attitude of scientific curiosity, nor a haughty and prejudiced position could help understand us, and raher than contribute toward a solution of the problems would only tend to aggravate them. Hence our duty to speak clearly. We must recognize, evaluate, and even be grateful for the desire that is being developed to hear our demands and to extend the hand of friendship in token of sincerity; but for

that very reason, we would not be responding to the significance of the new gesture (we might say, of the new "deal") if we did not use every opportunity to present, in a rough form, the real structure of our peoples and the seriousness of the obstacles in the path of our future.

Latin America occupies a vast continent whose area more than doubles that of the United States. Within that territory, which has an irregular shape, twenty sovereign states exist. States of different territorial extent and of differing human content, but all of them with common characteristics, among which that of not least importance is the vigorous national feeling which, at the cost of great sacrifices, has succeeded in maintaining in each one its own and independent political organizaition.

Two alternating thesis have been held with respect to the Latin American scene: the first one has insisted upon the characteristic of unity, which makes of all our peoples a single historical, geographic and human entity; the other has reminded us insistently that not all of the Latin American countries are the same; that there are among them different degrees of development, different densities of population, a different ethnic composition, and different degrees of culture. I think, despite the powerful argumens that can be adduced for accentuating the differences, that the first thesis is more correct.

Between Brazil, with almost eight million and a half square kilometers, and El Salvador, with twenty-one thousand, the difference in size is tremendous; but the difference between the area of Texas and that of Delaware or Rhode Island is algo great. European writers have placed emphasis on the differences in ethnic blends as beween Bolivia, whose "mestizos" reflect the presence of a strong Indian civilization, and Argentina, where the abundance of European immigrants marked he physiognamy of its people; but deeper ethnic differences exist between the inhabitants of New England and the inhabitants of the South; and if we look at occupational patterns, there are large differences between industrialized Michigan and agricultural Iowa.

There is a unity amidst variety. Taken as a whole, perhaps the most marked difference are those represented by Brazil, which in preserving the unity of the Portuguese colonies came to represent at na-

tional structure of almost half of the territory and a third of the population of Latin America, and Haiti, whose language and insular position have contributed to isolate her, although her necessary contact with the neighboring Dominican Republic draws her closer to the destinies of the other Latin American nations.

The two hundred million inhabitants of Latin America, for understandable difficulties of topography and endemic tropical diseases that now are being defeated, only occupy somewhat more than half of the continental territory. As in the United States until midway of the XIX century, the coastal areas housed the principal groups of population, because seas have been the great vehicle of communication; and the established sentiment of unity is all the more admirable when we realize that until the era of aviation it was easier to travel to Europe than to other Latin American countries from our own ports.

The population in the different republics of Latin America has a lot in common. Three great ethnic sectors, from Europe, from Africa, and possibly from Asia found in it, as in a hymn to God, a field for affirming the substantial unity of the species above any somatic and linguistic differences. Mestizos as we are, the degree of the mixture varies considerably. Almost purely European in the so-called"Southern Cone" (Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and the South of Brazil; mainly Indian and Spanish creoles, in Paraguay or Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, Colombia, Central America and Mexico; mulattos due to the almost total absence of the indigenous element, on the beaches of the Caribbean and on the North Coast of Brazil; what is certain is that the integration of the universal man is one of the most characteristic and promising realities of all Latin America. Venezuela, my country, is an example of the point that can be reached by fusion in the formation of a new human type; fusion accelerated in social dynamics by the bloody processes of the emancipation and civil wars. But it must be pointed out — and this seriously urges the responsibiliy of all wesern nations— that in this process of amalgamation the determining spiritual values of what is understood by Christian civilization definitely predominate. It may be said, then, that Latin Amedica was the first and greatest laboratory where, in mixing with beings from every extreme of the earth, European man poured into ecumenical man the deposit of Chris-

tian civilization. The work accomplished by Spain, in giving herself wholly to the conquest and colonization of the new world, has no parallel in history. By the middle of the XVIII century a closely-woven political organization covered he entire South American continent, Central America, and North America as far as California.

The North Amerian colonists of the East Coast were not even dreaming of beginning the penetration of the midwest when already European culture was definitely planted throughout the zone set aside for the colonization of the Spaniards and Portguese. Universities such as those of Mexico, Lima, Santo Domingo, Bogota, Caracas and many others flourished in testimony of the permanence and vigor of the undertaking. But Spain put herself to the task at the moment in which the world was beginning the industrial revolution and in which, precisely to compensate for the titanic effort and the providential fortune that the ships laden with gold extracted from the mines of America were taking to the Iberian Peninsula, the rivals of Europe were developing a new economy, which was going to displace the old concept of wealth. The Spanish and Portuguese colonies furnished raw materials to the industrial wolrd; the colonial system developed manufactures, but, it was careful to make sure that the principal activity of the colonies was to supply primary products to the world economy, and within such a vast economic organization it was natural, almost necessary that the different parts developed in the direction of a single product or crop, which while it increased levels of production accentuated the degree of economic dependence. This was to be made the more intense through the force of circumstance, when political independence, in cutting the ties with the metropolitan structure, tended to accentuate the isolation as among the various republics recently arrived on the politicial scene.

The first treaties of commerce marked the fate of supplies of raw materials, and destined to eternal dependence the countries liberated from Spain and Portugal. The money loaned by bankers with usurious greed to finance the struggle for emancipation, had the backing of diplomacy and the cannons of the respective powers; thus the economic power, the military power, and the politicial power of the countries needing raw products to transform in their factories, were quite vig-

ilant in seeing that we furnished no competition, but rather sold our products at a price set by the purchasers and bought manufactured articles at the price fixed by the sellers. The exporter was generally a gear in that machinery, a link in the chain that was to keep us in a perpetual state of inferiority.

As countries that produced primary products, dependent upon a single crop, obliged to seek in international treaties a more or less sure market in which to place their production, we had to accept as a condition the demand that was made of us not to burden with custom duties the goods manufactured by the industrialized countries and, as a result, to give up the effort to develop our own industry.

In the first treaties of friendship signed with England and the United States, commercial concern appeared immediately in the most-favored-nation clause. Later, to the pledge of ensuring favorable conditions for our export products, it was accompanied by the list of manufactured articles that we agreed not to place a duty upon. This list, by virtue of the most-favored-nation clause, was automatically converted into the condition that those articles could not be produced in the country through the rules of industrial protectionism.

While the United States is dependent upon its domestic market to the extent that for 1960 its imports reached only three per cent and its exports. 4.2% of the gross national product (one third of which is carried on from and to Latin America), for our countries exports constitute the oxygen lung for the entire economy. For 1960, total exports from Latin America amounted to eight billion six hundred and fifty-two million dollars, half of which went to the United States and one third to the countries of Western Europe. This left only one-sixth for the rest of the world, including Canada and the remaining countries of Latin America, which jointly took 10% leaving only 6% for the rest of the world. This reveals that an increase in the prices of export products of 20% would almost equal the total amount of aid promised by the United States in the Charter of Punta del Este for the next ten years. But what has happened is that while exportable raw materials have suffered a decline in prices, manufactured import products have continued their inflationary spiral which, in accentuating differences in

the balance of payments has continued to add to the malaise that is affecting our part of the world.

The problems confronting Latin America are serious. Their mere listing suffices to show the magnitude of the task of providing a remedy for them; and for he unprepared observer it reveals that, instead of criticism for what has been done there should be admiration for what has been accomplished.

Qualified authorities have spoken here about the outstanding features of the ambitious program that we are duty-bound to carry out. Nevertheless a general perspective is necessary in order not lo lose sight of the tremendous dimension of the effort demanded.

**Demographic explosion.** One of the most important characteristics of Latin America is its vigorous population growth. As I said earlier, its 2.5% vegetative growth is the highest in any continent. But it tends to rise as sanitary programs eradicate endemic diseases and raise the average life expectancy. Venezuela is an example of this; her giddy population growth, which exceed 4%, reflects the effects of her sanitary programs. It may be pointed out, for instance, that while in 1959 there was a total of 305,000 births and 57,000 deaths, in 1960 births rose to 332,000 and deaths fell, not only in percentage but in absolute numbers, totaling 53,000. That is to say, our country alone, with a little over seven and one-half million inhabitants, has an absolute annual growth virtually equal to that of France, with its 45 millions, and West Germany, with its 53 millions.

Of the three great regions of the Western World —the United States, Western Europe, and Latin America— the United States in 1960 showed 180 million inhabitants, Western Europe 258 millions, and Latin At the end of twenty years, if the present rate is maintained— and America 200 millions (while the Soviet Union reached 215 millions). this in Latin America tends to increase— Western Europe will have reached 290 millions, the United States 230 millions, the Soviet Union 255 millions, and Latin America will be on top with 330 millions.

This spectacular development of the human species in our Hemisphere poses great difficulties. I will not approach now the acute

controversy over birth control; but I wish only to observe that if this thesis by itself has brought as a consequence a reverse selection —for a while the rate of growth diminishes in the sector of the population that is better off, it increases without limit among those of fewer possibilities —the tendency toward restriction of birth would be more strange in a continent that scarcely occupies half of its territory, where there are vast and promising areas to be colonized and where systems that should lead to the maximum use of nature and of labor, such as those that have been tried out successfully in densenly populated regions, have not been tried out yet on a large scale.

**Production and industrialization.** The problem therefore is not in limiting life but in conquering the means of making existence possible. The first objective must be the raising of income levels in such a way that they can satisfy the essential needs. And if population increases at rate of 2.5%, production must be increased at a higher rate if it is desired not only to satisfy the needs of the new population but to take up the slack in existing deficiencies, which are the source of great pain in the heart of the Western world. In the case of Venezuela or Costa Rica, where the rate of population growth is over 4%, it is indispensable that an ambitious rate of development be fixed. For that reason the Charter of Punta del Este, in fixing the objetives for the Alliance for Progress, stated the following: "It is recognized that, in order to reach these objectives within a reasonable time, the rate of economic growth in any country of Latin America **should be not less than 2.5% per capita pe year, and that each participating country should determine its own growth target in the light of its stage of social and economic evolution, resource endowment, and ability to mobilize national efforts for development".**

The increase in production presupposes a series of aspects that must be taken care of simultaneously. One the one hand, in order to improve productivity large-scale programs of technical education are needed for the better training of laborers, programs that should be placed in the general plan of educational development as one of the essential points to take up. For another thing, an investment of capital is also necessary; one that can not be enclosed within the ideological rules nor stereotyped in classical formulas. Neither is private capital sufficient, nor

does its vocation direct it to all forms of investment that are necessary to ensure development. Nor would public investment be enough; rather it is necessary to reconcile state-to-state cooperation with reasonable encouragement to private capital to invest in economic acitvities that can guarantee it a fair return, but that at the same time will guarantee economic stability against ruinous fluctuations that, due to selfishness and circumstantial reasons, sometimes provoke maladjustments whose effects it is difficult to remedy.

A program of industrialization must be carried out, what does not mean that the nations of Latin America deny to participate on the world market offering their supplies of raw products, but in such a way that mechanisms are found for stabilizing the prices and for not deny ing them the possibility of transforming those products to the fullest extent of their resources for doing so. Hence the undeniable desire that exists in Latin America to revise the trade treaties that set up rigid obstacules to industrial protectionism; hence the sacrifices that its peoples have shown themselves, ready to make in order to achieve their economic independence; hence the favor with which is viewed that kind of investment that does foment development, that which is employed for useful acivities, that which is associated with native resources, that which reinvests a substantial part of its earning in new lines that accelerate the dynamics of progress.

It is urgent to develop this program in order to lessen the distances that make more painful the deficiencies in our economic organization; and since program of industrialization requires more extensive markets and demands plentiful and daring investments to develop basic industries that will permit later-transformation, it follows the necessity of establishing the common markets and the facts impose, above ideological schemes, the participation of the state in the formation and integration of units capable of developing basic items without which all hopes for industrialization are condemned to failure.

**Land reform.** The same process of industrialization demands, as one of its requirements, the formation of a rural class of small and medium landowners whose economic level will permit them to offer a sure market for the increased industrial product. Agrarian reform constitutes for that purpose one of the most deeply felt needs among

those of us who see the urgency of social change in the countries of Latin America. An impoverished rural population, being continuosly displaced from the land that it works, finding no security in the legal order or encouragement in the economic system, instead of a great driving force constitutes an obstacle whose negativity seriously handicaps the possibilities of any ambitious program.

A large part of the arable land of Latin America is not toiled because of the system established since colonial days. It has been repeated many times that while the Cuban sugar workers were working only a part of the year in the sugar plantations, the producers possessed reserve lands for the sole purpose of insuring possible future demands, and that one of the first steps taken by the Revolution to gain the favor of the **campesino** was to turn over to him those lands to cultivate during the slack months in the sugar business, finding out how to apply its energies and obtain a return from labor.

According to the census of 1950 only 1.5% of the land-owners owned 50% of the arable land of Latin America. The mere mention of this figure explains why the rural population has frequently been the culture for the growing of civil wars, a permanent factor of insecurity and anguish, a fertile ground for violence and deceit.

**Popular education.** A necessity that can not be postponed in reaching a decent level of development is popular education. Briefly, it is estimted that two fifths of the adult population of Latin America is still illiterate, and what is more serious an equal part of the children of school age lack the opportunity and means of attending school. A group of Brazilian educators headed by Fernando de Azevedo pointed out with reference to their great country the absenteeism of one-half of their school population in 1959. More acute were the figures given by Mc Lean Estenos from the Census of 1940 in his Educational Sociology of Peru: according to them almost 60% of the Peruvian population of school age was lacking instuction, and over 62% of the adult population was illiterate; in some regions the percentage of children lacking educational facilities went as high as 68%.

Much has been done in recent years. In Venezuela alone, it may be pointed out that from 1957 to 1962 the number of children having

access to school increased from 50,000 to 1,300,000 which is equivalent to 86% of the total school age population. Adult illiteracy has gone down in four years from 56.8% to 26.8% But this required a tremendous fiscal effort; in only four years the educational budget has passed from U..S. $80 millions per annum to U.S. $250 millions. A similar effort could not be demanded of other Latin American countries, nor could ours carry it foward in the same speed until the problem is solved. The Alliance for Progress contains for that purpose the promise of cooperation so as to give primary education to the entire school age population, which according to estimates means an increase in registration from approximately 26 millions of children in 1960 to some 45 millions in 1970. The fulfillment of the duty to give basic learning to the population of this hemisphere can not, in truth, be postponed; and the plan implies not only required primary education but the need for techincal training and of inreasing high school and college education fitting to the needs of presenty-day life.

**Social conditions.** But, that same anguish that demands an urgent program of develoment is better shown by observing the social conditions that surround the peoples of Latin America. The proclamation of human rights would remain empty for them if a system of truly human living were not made possible. To speak of freedom of work to some one who has no job; of freedom of trade for some one who has nothing to buy; of guarantees of property to someone who has not succeeded in possessing a plot of land on which to live; of the inviolability of domicile to someone who does not even possess the hope of obtaining a house, has more the sound of irony than of conviction. And the danger is clear: that the other freedoms that are essential to the affirmation of the human being —freedom of expression and thought freedom to worship God, freedom to educate ones' ciildren, freehom to participate in the governing of the state, come to be put at auction, to be bartered, not even for a reality but for the mere offer of a better life.

Bold statistics of the per capita income show the gravity of the situation. While the average in the United States is over $2,000 per year, in Latin America it does not exceed $200. But further analysis of that figure give variations that make the situation still more delicate. Within the Hemisphere we find considerable differences: the average

for Argentina is over $500, while for Haiti it is less than $80. But within each country there are fluctuations that also give evidence of the social problem of distribution of income. Before starting the program of land reform in my country, it was pointed out that while the average per capita income appeared in the misleading indices as $825, maybe the highest in Latin America, 20% of the rural families had an annual income of 400 bolivares (then worth less than $120). In Chile Father Vekemans observes that while 6% of the population has an annual income (per capita) of $1,900, 30% of it ranges between $300 and $330 and the majority of 58% only have $110. In Cuba, in 1958, there were 600,000 unemployed (for an active population of some two millions and a half) at the time of the harvest, that is, of greatest seasonal employment; and a study ublished in 1960 in a Catholic magazine, **Fomento Social**, estimated the annual per capita income of the rural population at $90.

Other social conditions show a similar proportion. In an OAS report of 1953 it was concluded that 80% of the rural population of Latin America lived in housing that met none of the minimum requirements of hygiene; and the urban growth hastened precisely by the low level of life in the rural areas, has ringed our cities with a dense and shameful display of the most defective types of field houses: he names "rancho" in Venezuela; "villa miseria" in Argentina; "fabela" in Brazil; "bohio" in the Caribbean Islands; "callampa" in Chile, have become familiar in the vocabulary of the Latin American social drama. There are countries where illiteracy in the rural areas is still around 80%.

More than half of the population of Latin America is undernourished, and the average life expectancy is twenty years less than in Western Europe or the United States.

**Political situation.** With such a panorama it is easy to understand the political difficulties through which the Continent af Hope is passing. A vicious circle has been enclosinng the debate between two forms of government: autocracy, which superimposes as the mechanical force of agglutination the personal power of some chiefs or caudillos for the benefit of small groups, or democracy, which rests on the will of the people and determined to serve the interest of the entire community.

The political history of a majority of the Latin American republics has been one long cavalry. A bloody war of independence opened the road of freedom, but it also left as a by-product the easy resort to violence. The despotic government has appeared at one or another times as a formula for solving immediate situations; its duration and its effectiveness have depended a great deal upon the personal characteristics of each tyrant and upon surrounding conditons; but no autocracy has succeeded, even with a long life and extended possibilities for action, in solving any of the basic problems: education, health, housing, employment, or food for the people.

Democracy constitutes not only an ambition but a firm purpose in the will of our peoples. Tyrannies have been able to keep themselves at peace only apparently; the unmistakable decision for our people has been, once and again, to win freedom annd maintain a system of institutional government. For this objective blood has been shed, lives have been given, prison and exile as been suffered, the generous contribution of the best lives has been made.

It has been said and is being said now that the democratic system is not suited to mixed peoples, nor even to the Iberian communities of Europe; that only the maturity of the Anglo-Saxons is adequate to maintain it. Those who say this seem to forget that when in 1215 John Lackland made his pact with the English barons, the Spaniards had behind them several centuries of applying solid principles of democracy in their statute laws; and that in the same century of the Magna Carta Alfonso the Wise enriched the legal culture of the world with the enduring monument of the "Siete Partidas". (Laws of Castille).

The episodes of the political struggle for the exercise of power and the controversies between the monarchical and the republican systems in England were not exepmt from the episodes that cruelty and ambition have placed in combat in every part. And the peoples of Latin America have shown, each time that they have had a propitious occasion for it, their understanding of freedom and their aptitude for the exercise of suffrage.

What has happened is that, since the normal development of the process has been interrupted one or more times, its exercise today de-

mands a special effort Freedom must be maintained at the same time that it must be defended against those who seek to take advantage of collective inexperience to apply a system that, from the right or from the left, are unwilling to recognize the worth of the human person and try to annihilate it by offering in change order or welfare. There is a need to leave in the hands of the people the source of power at the same time that an urgent program of education is being developed that will make them better and better equipped to exercise this responsibility (as Sarmiento said: "the people are the sovereign; we must educate the sovereign; we must educate the sovereign"). But fundamentally the structures must be transformed so that the national income may be increased more greatly and distributed more wisely; so that each one may obtain work and, through it, the satisfaction of primary needs at a suitable level.

Democratic currents in Latin America are debated in a sea of contradicitons, not only poliical but economic and social. Democracy has to show that the road to justice and well-being for the popular classes is that of freedom and law. But that lesson is more than urgent; it cannot be postponed. It is not possible to accept the argument that other systems should be tried, because then, the experience of damage done can be irreversible. They have tried reactionary, personal dictatorship and they know what that means; they have not yet tried so-called "popular" dictatorship; the example of Cuba is confused in the tangle of propoganda and a direct test would only give evidence at the end of who knows how long and God knows at what price. The endurance of the popular support for the present democratic experiment in Venezuela. scourged by economic difficulties and attacked pitilessly from the redoubts of the extreme right and the extreme left, is a promising sample of the civic conscience of our communities. But in order to preserve it and increase it, is necessary to translate into deeds, larger than our resources will stand, the indispensable will to serve.

**Hemispheric relations.** To the present synthesis must be added something concerning the relations of Latin America with the rest of the western world, and particularly with the United States.

There are negative factors in the background of those relations, and their mention is not an unexpected novelty for North Americans

concerned with finding a satisfactory solution to problems of the hemisphere.

At the beginning of these remarks I referred to one basic point: that of the economic relations between our countries as producers of primary products and the manufacturing countries. Those relations would imply for us a situation of eternal dependence and an insurmountable obstacle to progress, if attention were not paid, on the one hand, to our demands with respect to a market and stable prices for our export products and. on the other, the requirements that go along with our process of industrialization. The need for a sure market and a system of price stabilization for articles from which our peoples live (petroleum, iron, tin, coffee, sugar, bananas, wool, etc.) is the highest guarantee against the repetition of great crises attended by tremendous convulsions. Moreover, the renunciation by the industrialized countries of policies that wiuld make our industrialization impossible (among these the one that prevents customs protection) and technical and financial assistance for development are an urgent demand of reality.

But the road of understanding implies the removal of still other obstacles. When the communists stir up anti-North American sentiment they do not limit themselves to inventing truculent stories, but they exploit facts that lend themselves to misunderstanding. Private North American capital, for example, has for a long time been the main representative of the United States in the Latin American countries. We must not fail to recognize that some of its agents have shown sensibility, understanding, and a spirit of justice; nor must we keep silent about the fact that its attitude has been progressively changing in favor of a new deal; but the truth compels us to say that in many cases its desire for profit has been its only standard, which frequently led it to make pacts with reprehensible forces and act in a way that aggravated structural ills, increasing the causes of malaise.

Old discriminatory practices have aroused resentment; the establishment of economic control over our primary products and resistence to investment in partnership with domestic capital for the development of a country's own source has increased the dependence and in many of our countries aggravated the imbalance in the balance of payments. On many occasions the people were accustomed to seeing the United

States through forces that appeared linked to tyrants from whom they obtained support and whose investment helped to widen distances in the social stratification, between small groups enriched with their operations and the great impoverished majorities. Those circumstances, stirred up by the numerous means and resources available to the communists, make of a position hostile toward the United States the inseparable companion of demagogy, which sees in it an easy mean for reaching large sectors.

The fulfillment of the Alliance for Progress can constitute a rectification of delayed plans. Already in the closing days of the previous administration statements were made that revised the position within which factors of egoism and misunderstanding had been hidden; the new Administration has courageously assumed the establishment of a new way.

Recognition of the duty to cooperate financially and technically, not in hemeopatic quantities but in measures substantially suited for bringing about tangible results; that cooperation towards economic development cannot have as its goal the enrichment of a certain number, but the satisfaction of the basic needs and the raising of the standard of living of the great majorities; the proclamation of the duty to collaborate, not only through private initiative but with energetic state force to the setting of goals for structural transformation, such as land reform, and popular education, are decisive acts of extraordinary scope. It should not be wondered at that those, there or here, who would prefer to be direct beneficiaries of the program or who aspire to worsen the ills in order to provoke a crash, coincide in their open criticism or in their hidden resistance of that which this great rectification entails.

We Latin Americans know that there are great dangers besetting the road that has been started. We have no doubt that the technical difficulties and bureaucratic red-tape constitute a part of those obstacles, but perhaps they are not the main ones. The central aspect of succeess resides, to our way of thinking, in that the Alliance for Progress be a program of peoples and not only of governments. Democracy rests upon the popular will. Nothing would be made with the good will of the ones who govern if there did not exist in Latin America the will of

the people to understand the purposes of this program, and in the United States the common will of its citizens to back it and strengthen it.

We know that heavy burdens rest upon the shoulders of the North American taxpayer, but it is a question now of something that involves not only the greatest interest in his security, but the perfomance of a duty. The North American citizen is beginning to understand that the defense of the free world has an Achilles' heel because one of its three essential parts is victim of serious ailments that could nullify the efforts of the other two; but he must also be convinced that the lack of cooperation for Latin America in former years was a dramatic mistake and that what is demanded today is an obligation imposed by human solidarity.

For some years there has circulated in the field of social relations the idea that justice demands not only that which each man has pledged to turn over to the other, but that we are all obliged, to the extent of our strength, to contribute to the common good. This is the idea of social justice, whose recognition has already passed the limits of any doctrine and has taken body in the laws of every country and in the great declarations of rights. Therefore, that same principie has validity in the relations among peoples. International social justice obligates each according to its capacity to do everything necessary for other people in order to achieve the common international good.

The President of the United States and his most authorized assistants have issued categoric statements reflecting these same ideas. But they would not suffice if the North American people and their representative sectors did not receive them with conviction and put into their fulfillment the energy demanded by the challenging undertaking. That is what would ensure the desired success; and it would offer the possibility of showing to the dense human groups of Latin America that the government and people of the United States are identified with the cause of their libeeration and their welfare.

A valuable contribution is that of the program that your most reputable training institutions are carrying out in order to make our problems known and to analyze the factors of indispensable collaboration.

The Program of Latin American Studies that Georgetown University is conducting under the able leadership of Doctor William Manger and with the cooperation of distinguished personalities is a special example. And I do not know how to properly thank Reverend Edward B. Bunn, President of this University, and Doctor Manger for the high honor of inviting me to participate in this colloquium.

To summarize my ideas, in conclusion, I would like to state that Christian Civilization is at present facing its crucial test in Latin America. There it is going to be demonstrated whether the spiritual values that make it up are compatible, as we hold, with the social democracy and economic development that those nations are demanding. If we were to fail in that undertaking we would open the gates to the violent and negative torrent of materialistic solutions. If, as we hope, we emerge victorious, we will have shown that Christian Civilization is the formula that ensures, through the redemption of the weak, peace and justice for all men of good will.