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Face To Face
A program to improve understanding of international issues through direct communication between Government officials and private citizens sponsored jointly by the American Foreign Service Association and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

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March 28, 1974

Foreign Policy Study Group: Part VIII
U.S.-Latin American Relations
with Marcos McGrath, Archbishop of Panama

Dear Study Group Member:

On Tuesday, April 16, Marcos McGrath, Archbishop of Panama, will discuss with us U.S.-Latin American relations, starting from his Foreign Affairs article "Ariel or Caliban". (Copy enclosed.)

Our discussion, on the eve of the next meeting of U.S./Latin American Foreign Ministers (Washington, April 17/18), will focus on Latin American fear of United States domination, with the Panama Canal Treaty as a case study.

Archbishop McGrath was former Vice President of the Council of Latin American Bishops (1966-72) and member of the Doctrinal Commission of Vatican Council II (1962-65).

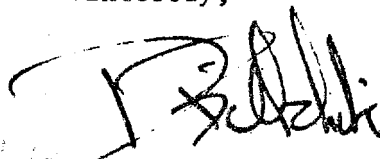
George C. Lodge, Professor of Business Administration at Harvard University, and Vice-Chairman of the Board of the Inter-American Foundation, will moderate the session.

We will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the Federal City Club (off the lobby of the Sheraton-Carlton Hotel, 16th & K Streets, N.W.).

The Archbishop will begin his remarks at 7:00 p.m., followed by discussion, dinner at 8:00 p.m., and discussion continuing after dinner until 10:15 p.m.

Please let Mrs. Haskins know whether or not you can join us. ✓
(Tel: 332-6929.)

Sincerely,

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David Biltchik

ARIEL OR CALIBAN?

By Marcos G. McGrath

Reprinted From

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

AN AMERICAN QUARTERLY REVIEW



OCTOBER 1973

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

AN AMERICAN QUARTERLY REVIEW



OCTOBER 1973

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ARIEL OR CALIBAN?

By Marcos G. McGrath

LET me begin with a story. It occurs in a backward rural area of Panama. Perhaps it may help toward a better understanding, in simple terms, of the larger subject of the Americas.

Some years ago when I was Bishop of a poor rural Diocese in the Republic of Panama, a situation of conflict developed between the residents of a small town and the "campesinos" (poor farmers) of the surrounding district. The conflict was basically economic; but it took on many other aspects, became quite emotional and developed into situations of violence.

To understand the problem one must understand the area. The district is hilly, partly jungle, and undeveloped in that it lacks roads and, outside of the main town, electricity and running water. The town had about 600 inhabitants. It had a complete primary school. Most of the people in the town could get their children through primary school and even send them off to high school or vocational school, and some to the university, either in the capital of the Province or in the nation's capital. Most of these townspeople lived off their larger tracts of land; some made their living from the three or four stores in the town, or in government positions such as mayor, teachers, etc. But in the countryside the 10,000 campesinos who lived scattered over the more than 1,000 square miles of the district suffered from extreme want. The land was fertile, but very few of them owned any land. They used the slash-and-burn method, shifting from one place to another every two or three years as the land gave out because of the lack of fertilizer, insecticide, etc. Most were illiterate.

The main problem of the whole area was its inaccessibility. The rich produce—coffee, citrus fruits, bananas, potatoes, corn, rice, sugar cane—was noncommercial because during the long rainy season of six to seven months it could only be shipped out from the main town by the few available four-wheel traction cars, or by light airplanes that risked flying up to the hills and landing on the dangerous airstrip serving the town.

For generations the campesinos had lived on less than a subsistence economy. Most of them received an annual income of

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less than \$50 in cash. They raised what little they could on their small scattered sites. Because the produce was so small that they could not afford to take it into the larger towns for sale, they had to sell it to the stores in this center town of their district. But the storekeepers gave them less than the going market price; and at the end of the harvest season, when the produce had perhaps glutted the market, sometimes the campesinos could not sell it at all. Even selling it to the stores in this little town, often they received part cash and had to accept the rest in credit with the store. When in turn they would have to buy a few essential items, such as cloth with which to clothe themselves and their children, the prices were higher than in the capital city and even in the capital of the Province.

This tremendous economic dependence on the storekeepers carried over into other forms of dependence. Since the campesinos were squatters on lands which belonged sometimes to the townspeople, sometimes to absentee landowners resident in the capital city who were represented by some of the local townspeople, the campesinos were also politically dependent. In the frequent political campaigns they were expected to vote in the manner dictated by the local "cacique" (political leader), who represented the economic interests of the stores and of the large landholders. What began to break up this whole situation and produce conflicts was the introduction of coöperatives among the campesinos.

This was begun by the local Diocese. First a Panamanian priest and a young high school graduate from a nearby town in the same Province, both of whom had studied coöperatives in Antigonish, Canada, and then other young high school graduates from the Province who received this or similar training, began visiting the towns and countryside to talk about coöperatives. The Diocese set up a social office to organize and support this effort. Its personnel promoted meetings among all those who were interested. This led to the construction of a center to which the campesinos would come for courses of one, two, three or more days.

At first hardly anyone with economic or political power paid any attention to this movement because it was generally considered that the campesino was incapable of any real initiative to improve his situation. He was thought ignorant, lazy, indiscriminate in his moral practices, often abandoning women and children as he shifted from one area to another in his slash-and-burn

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method. But after about two years of patient, weekly meetings, coöperatives began to take shape in some communities. They were first called pre-coöperatives, because they had not yet reached the stage of formal organization, or of incorporation in the law. But they soon began to act as coöperatives, and by the third year of their existence the scattered groups had formed a federation of coöperatives named after Pope John XXIII, which acquired an identity before the law and began to set up stores for the buying and selling of its own goods, first in the capital city of the Province and then in some of the main townships of the districts, including the town we were speaking of.

Not long after beginning their labors in coöperative training, the first priest and layman in this effort discovered that they had to set aside the classic method of starting with a savings coöperative for the simple reason that these campesinos had almost nothing to save. They developed what gradually turned into a production and consumer coöperative.

The first year that the original store operated in the capital of the Province it barely kept out of the red. The second year it had a capital movement of \$27,000. By the fourth year it was close to \$500,000. Also by this time the coöperative stores in the outlying towns were prospering. In the particular town in question, the coöperative store had become far and away the best equipped, the best operated and the largest in town.

Myths were being broken. Studies carried out by the Diocese had established that the so-called laziness of the campesinos was largely due to a permanent state of malnutrition. Many of them during the scarcest months of the rainy season had to subsist along with their families on a cup of coffee and some bread in the morning and a plate of rice and beans during the day. The alcoholism or general drunkenness among the campesinos came to be seen as the obvious effect of taking liquor whenever possible to get quick energy for work, a habit which easily turned the campesinos into real or potential alcoholics. The apparent lack of concern for the wife and children and indiscriminate abandonment of both to set up new families in other areas were many times the sad effects of having no land on which to set up a permanent home. The miserable housing, with lack of even minimal health conditions, was due to the lack of incentive to build when every two or three years the campesino would have to move on to a new site. The lack of education of the children, who often

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were not even sent to the schools by their parents, was due to the same lack of incentive and the need to count on these children to help in the hard tasks upon the land.

The myths were broken for those who were studying the question. But the caciques in the town, their families, and the townspeople in general, continued to believe in these myths. They continued to talk about the many kindnesses they had performed for the campesinos in the past. They could not recognize that this paternalism was a disguise for continuing a state of economic and political subjugation which impeded the development of these campesinos. The new personality and initiative of these campesinos surprised and worried the townspeople.

Since the single priest in the district could visit each of these country communities only every two or three months, the Church's effort for the campesinos in the economic area was coupled with what is called "evangelization." This consisted of the training of men and women in each of the country areas to lead religious services on Sunday and prepare all of these people and their children, not only for prayer and some knowledge of the faith, but also for the reception of the sacraments and participation in the Mass. Many of the couples who had long lived together were married at their own request, often in the presence of their children, and began participating actively with communion in the liturgical services. This religious stability was due not only to a growth in faith, but also to the beginning of some economic stability as a basis for family life.

On one occasion some 50 campesinos had come in from the land for a three-day course in the main town. From humble, passive peasants, with heads bowed and straw hats in hand, they had developed into upright persons speaking independently and fairly about religion, about their families, and about their efforts to improve their situations. They spoke with no bitterness or aggressiveness against others, but rather of their own efforts.

Their peacefulness was demonstrated on this occasion. On the Friday night of their weekend course, some of the children of the local townspeople had gathered around the rancho in which the campesinos were trying to sleep and shouted insults at them, telling them to go back to their land and stop bothering the town. The local policeman did nothing about it. The following night the same children, mostly of high school age, who were in town on vacation, repeated their act and added to it by throwing stones

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at the rancho. Again the campesinos did nothing. They did not even tell me about this when I came the next day. It was the priest who told me.

I went with the priest to see the town mayor. I asked him why neither he nor the policeman had stopped these abuses. He could give me no answer. I told him that unless something were done about it I would bring criminal charges against the parents of these children in the capital city of the Province. In view of this he called a meeting of all the townspeople for that very evening.

In the meeting, one after another expressed their excuses and regret for the incident. I tried to get at the heart of the question. It was true that the coöperative store cut down the sales of other stores in town; but it was quite obvious that the campesinos had not only a legal right to the store, but also a moral right to fight for a more decent level of life. This did not impress them. I tried another argument. A more prosperous "campesinado" would mean economic progress for the whole area. If they all joined in fighting for the year-round road to the town, all would benefit: in trade, in services, even in tourism. Instead of fighting over a few pennies, why did they not consider the prospect of a more abundant situation for both the campesinos and themselves? Both arguments, the moral and that based on self-interest, were coldly received.

Shortly afterwards I had to leave this Diocese when I was named Archbishop in the capital city. The conflicts between the townspeople and the campesinos went on and on. The usual accusations against the campesinos of drunkenness, of laziness, of robbery, of immorality, etc., continued to be used as excuses for measures, sometimes violent, to stop the coöperative movement. The center of attack became the priest, who, with the support of the new Bishop, time and again defended the campesinos in their rights. Finally, one sad evening toward midnight, the priest was dragged from the hut where he was staying, disappeared, and has never been found. Tragedy reached its peak in this incident, which struck at the heart of the Panamanian people and of the Church in Panama. The crime has not been solved to this day, but its causes were evident.

The coöperative goes on and has even grown in strength. But the resentments of many townspeople remain; no real alliance for progress in this area has yet been achieved; and the dangers of violence remain ever present. The situation of injustice for

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so long wreaked upon these campesinos, and which is only beginning to be solved in this area, exists throughout much of Latin America. The attempts on the part of the campesinos to group together and better their situation are often met with the same kind of repression disguised with moral accusations against them. This particular group of campesinos, thanks to its Christian formation, has continued on the path of positive nonviolent action. But how easy it would be for them, now conscious of their dignity, their rights and their possibilities, to meet injustice with hate, to attack repression with violence!

Why do I recount this story in such detail? There are several reasons. The first perhaps is to recognize from the very beginning that the situations of injustice existing in Latin America, internally speaking, are our own fault. We cannot lay the blame on the United States or anyone else. The second reason is to point out the great potential that a message of liberation, joined to organizational know-how, holds for these poor. But so much depends on who gives this message and what it says!

The third and obvious reason is to draw a parallel. The same kind of myths which are used by the townspeople to rationalize systematic injustice toward the campesinos characterizes the attitude and actions of many individuals and many institutions in the United States toward Latin America.

II

While both the United States and Latin America are offshoots of Europe, they have grown off separate branches, in different manners, and with very little contact between one another until this century.

What is now Latin America was visited, conquered and settled by Europeans in the century before Plymouth Rock. They came in the name of the Kings of Spain and Portugal. They brought with them the mental and social structures of monarchy and feudal organization. They established a colonial regime dependent politically, economically, culturally and religiously upon the mother countries, and cut off, like them, from the Europe to the north. The conquerors mixed with the original native and the later black slave populations, sharing with them their blood and their faith. But not completely. The structures of economic and cultural dominance remained unchanged even by the revolutions of independence in the early nineteenth century. The

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new political constitutions, in the spirit of the French Revolution and modeled upon the U.S. Constitution, set up formal democracy, for which there was no working basis. Colonialist dependence, giving up prime materials in exchange for manufactured goods, continued—now toward England and France. Later it would be primarily toward the United States.

By contrast, the first communities which landed on the eastern seaboard of what is now the United States came from England and northern Europe. Many came in protest against their mother countries, often to escape religious persecution. They brought the Protestant ethic, which emphasized individual responsibility, work and material success as signs of divine predestination.

At this early stage of independence, there was little effective contact between the new nation to the north and those to the south. Latin American leaders, political and literary, voiced strong admiration for the great new democracy that had shown the way to freedom. The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 was well received by them. They appreciated the promise of help against European interventions. They were disappointed when, in the face of concrete interventions, it was not given.

But the picture changed. In the early 1800s there was not much difference in the material standards and comforts, north and south. Cultural and artistic manifestations were richer in Latin America. But the Industrial Revolution between 1820 and 1910, aided by 28 million immigrants, a ready-made work force, lifted the economic standards in the United States. Soon the U.S. per capita income was twice that of Latin America. By 1970 it would be 18 times greater, with the gap growing wider.

Second, the United States began to appear on the horizon as a predatory threat. The Mexican War and land grab (1846-48) sent a shock wave all the way to the South Pole. Beautiful clipper ships presaged the spread of U.S. economic interest and investment—with the same colonialist spirit shown by Europe in the past. Growing U.S. interest and intervention in the Caribbean area, in pursuit of its own interests, burst into the Spanish-American War, the so-called "taking of Panama" with an imposed treaty, and the continued "big stick" policy of "dollar diplomacy" and armed intervention which marked the next 30 years in Mexico and the Caribbean. José Enrique Rodó, the Uruguayan author, wrote, in 1900, *Ariel and Caliban*: the values of the spirit versus ambitious material expansion. Martí,

Ruben Darío and others expressed the same fears. García Calderón, prominent Peruvian writer, warned in 1911: "Everywhere the Americans of the north are feared. In the Antilles and in Central America hostility against the Anglo-Saxon invaders assumes the character of a Latin crusade."

Meanwhile new processes were at work in Latin America. The application of modern medical progress had kicked off toward the end of the century the beginning of the phenomenal population explosion. The Industrial Revolution began to take real effect in some of the major urban areas about the same time, and these two new factors provoked crises on the land, where the population could no longer support itself, leading to the flooding of impoverished peasants to the urban areas. The center of political concern shifted from the old anticlerical and clerical debates to what had become far more existentially meaningful: the new economic concerns. In these early decades of the century we find the first beginnings of the labor unions, of the Socialist parties of the Left, and with the Russian revolution, the Marxist-Communist influence. The universities, expanding in numbers, became nerve centers of political awareness and agitation. This process took place particularly in the more politically mature areas of the southern cone of Latin America—along with the remarkable phenomenon of the Mexican Revolution.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt launched the "Good Neighbor Policy" as a road to understanding and collaboration. It was forgotten during the conflagration which was the Second World War. After the war, the process of industrialization continued, if in a desultory fashion, throughout Latin America, in the midst of an economic recession resulting from the falling off of sales for the war effort. There developed throughout Latin America serious concern for the ever more complicated socio-economic problems, typified by the swelling urbanization (São Paulo, for example, growing by 300 to 400 thousand a year). Political pressure polarized to the Right, to the Marxist Left, and into the new reform movements of Christian inspiration, characterized as Christian Democratic parties and labor unions.

It was at this point that the so-called decade of development of the 1960s was announced amid new hope. It had been sharply motivated by the Communist take-over in Cuba. It was phrased in the terms of the Alliance for Progress as set up in Punta del Este in 1961.

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There are many reasons for the failure of the Alliance for Progress. It made some gains. But it failed in the essential aim of effective economic assistance from the north, not only from the United States but also from Western Europe, not only from the governments but also from private investment; it failed to get at the key issues of trade and the powerful weight of foreign and international investments in Latin America; and it failed in most of our countries because of the ineffectiveness of the reform measures that it relied on—such as land and tax reforms.

These failures cast great doubt on the possibility of achieving the necessary reforms for the integral development of our peoples within the capitalist structure of each nation and the overall capitalist structure of the international and particularly the inter-American economy. They have cast serious doubt upon the possible effectiveness of democratically constituted nations, in which the exercise of democracy has been for the most part merely formal and often abused by the few in power for their benefit. We have seen military take-overs in one after another of our nations. We see the widely and rapidly expanding conviction among many that the only salvation for Latin America is in one or another of the possible Socialist solutions. We see the rise of nationalism within each country in the affirmation of its rights, particularly over its natural resources and major public services and the industries based on natural resources. We see the rise of an overall nationalism in Latin America—of a consciousness, so far not translated effectively into action, that the whole of Latin America must group together in its common interests if it is to face up effectively to the powerful nation to the north and in general to the developed nations of the world. We see a growing desire in Latin America to make common cause with the rest of the so-called Third World.

III

The recent Rockefeller Report on Latin America devotes exactly nine lines to the Church—and writes it off as ingenuous. This is true Caliban. One could as well ignore Islam in an analysis of the Arab nations.

Pope Paul VI, in addressing the Latin American Bishops in Rome a few days before the close of the Second Vatican Council (November 24, 1965), said: "The Church by her actions must give proof that not only has she been an integral part in the for-

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mation of each of the nations of Latin America, but that today also she strives to be a beacon light and a saving force in the present process of transformation."

There were glories of the Church during the colonial period in Latin America—glories both religious and humanitarian. There were, to the modern eye, also many defects: especially her close identification with the whole social structure, such as it was. She was an integral part of what went on.

The revolution of independence shook the Church. Many bishops and priests who sided with Spain had to leave; others sided with the revolution. Christians were deeply divided. For many years, because of the conflicting claims of Spain and the new nations, no new bishops could be named, seminaries were closed, and the number and quality of priests declined seriously. Political factions, all from the upper classes, divided into clerical and anticlerical postures. In one country, 95 percent Catholic, the anticlericals in power made the celebration of Mass by a priest a criminal offense subject to capital punishment.

At the close of the century, the official Church was weakened and tired. In 1899, Pope Leo XIII convoked in Rome the First General Conference of (all) Latin American Bishops. Reform and renovation were badly needed. The primary insistence was on better preparation of the priests and stronger motivation of the laity. Through the early decades of the century the accent was still individualistic, in the static context of the old society. But by the decade of the 1930s, largely in response to Papal encyclicals, new movements emerged of liturgical promotion, of lay apostolate, and of social action.

In the face of the economic recession after the Second World War and its wake of socio-economic distress, the various Christian social movements among students, workers and campesinos broke off from the traditionally conservative Catholic political parties. This was the period of foundation and growth of new political parties and labor unions of Christian inspiration, bent upon serious structural reforms in society.

By this time not only the Vatican but the rest of the Catholic world had come to the sharp realization that the Catholics of Latin America represented approximately one-third of the Roman Catholics of the world, and that their 700 bishops represented approximately one-fourth of the world's Catholic Bishops. Out of this conviction and at the urging of the Holy See, the

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Catholic Bishops of the United States, Canada and the West European nations began strong programs of support for the Church in Latin America. These involved the sending of priests, nuns and lay leaders, principally from Spain and the United States, and of considerable funds for religious and social promotion from the North American and European Churches, especially in West Germany.

There is no doubt that this concentrated effort, along with the interest from which it sprang, gave to the Church in Latin America a greater awareness of her mission as well as significant and timely assistance. As the world began to be aware of the contrasting situations of the rich and the poor nations, as development came to the fore as the major problem of most nations, many became suddenly aware that Latin America constituted the only large area of the underdeveloped world which was predominantly Christian. It shared in the West European Christian tradition, but also shared in the post-colonial problems of dependence and development of the African and Asian worlds. What happened here in Latin America came to be of considerable importance for Christianity and particularly for the Catholic Church everywhere.

The Latin American Bishops at the Second Vatican Council surprised their colleagues, who had rather expected that they would be passive participants. Quite to the contrary, they repeatedly urged that all questions be presented in a global, and not merely in a European, context. They insisted on issues of wealth and poverty, on the local and on the international plane. The Council in turn had a profound effect on the Church in Latin America. Along with Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* in 1963 and Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio* in 1967, it officially confirmed the new orientation of the Catholic Church of Latin America. Temporal issues like development have taken on new meaning. Salvation is integral—of the whole man. Working for a better human society now is the personal condition and collective preparation for the world to come. "Development is the modern name for peace," Pope Paul VI has said.

The creation of the Council of Latin American Bishops (CELAM) in 1955 provided a superstructure which, with time, would give impulse to this new orientation. Although only a Council, composed of elected bishops from each of the nations

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and without jurisdiction over the Churches in each of these lands, CELAM set up a number of departments and training institutes, and promoted numerous seminars on every level in which the message of the Council was brought to bear on the Latin American situation. All of these meetings led to the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellin, Colombia, in 1968. There about 150 bishops, elected to represent their Churches, along with a good number of experts and Protestant observers whose presence denoted the new ecumenical tone of the Church in Latin America, felt themselves to be, as it were, in a new Pentecost. This two-week meeting was convoked by Pope Paul VI at the request of CELAM, which in turn organized it, and the Pope himself personally inaugurated the meeting.

Medellin is a strong and eloquent call for serious religious renovation. This is characterized, as in the Council, by a return to the sources of faith in the scriptures, by a broader participation of all members of the Church in the spreading of this faith through preaching and living the Gospel in concrete terms, and by an open ecumenical attitude toward other Christian Churches and all men of good faith. Medellin also sounds a strong call to serious and concerted action, in honest conformity with the Gospel spirit, toward justice within each community and on the international level as the necessary condition for peace. Some of the texts demand a serious reëxamination of accepted positions. For example:

The liberal capitalist system and the temptation of the Marxist system appear as the only alternatives in our continent for the transformation of economic structures. Both these systems are affronts to the dignity of the human person. The first takes as a premise the primacy of capital, its power, and the discriminating use of capital in the pursuit of gain. The other, although ideologically it may pretend to be humanist, looks rather to the collective man, and in practice converts itself into a totalitarian concentration of state power. It is our obligation to denounce this situation in which Latin America finds itself caught between these two options and remains dependent upon one or other of the centers of power which control its economy. (*Document on Justice*, paragraph 10)

There are other similarly strong statements on the abusive concept of the *absolute* right to private property, on the necessity of worker participation in the decisions of economic enterprises, on some of the more blatant injustices suffered by Latin America on the international level, and similarly on some of the cruder injustices suffered within our borders. Medellin rejects violence

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as a solution to these problems, as not in the spirit of the Gospel. But it denounces existing situations of oppression, which it does not hesitate to call "institutional violence" against the poor.

The five-year period "after Medellin" has seen a rich and confusing development of different tendencies in the Church of Latin America. Some sectors of the Church have insisted primarily on the religious renovation in the faith and liturgical life; others far more upon Christian denunciation of existing oppression and the pursuit of radical change for social justice. Still others, in turn, have resisted and denounced what they consider the extreme positions in both the religious and the social domain. Priests, anxious for quick action in the social area, have spoken out individually and in groups, especially in the southern cone of South America, asserting a new kind of political and socio-economic leadership which most of the bishops have criticized as not proper to their priestly functions. The tendency of some of these groups to make common cause with all activists in the area of social reform, and very concretely with the Marxists—not only in their historical analysis of the situation of oppression versus liberation but also in the support of Marxist Socialist parties and governments—has produced a minor shock wave throughout the Church of Latin America. The "theology of liberation" has been developed in sundry articles and in a few more systematic books. It strives to integrate eternal salvation and revolutionary action for a just order in this world into one and the same concept and process of "liberation." Its applications cover the gamut of problems from nonviolent resistance (pacifism) to "Christians for Socialism" who choose common revolutionary action with Marxism.

The urgency of the reforms often leads to quick unreflective action, to oversimplicity in new theological formulations—for some, dedicated to a new "evangelization" of our peoples, in the domain of faith, sacraments, and the ministry; for others, intent upon social reform, in the areas of faith and revolution. Many of the forerunners, both religious and social, voice their impatience with the "authorities" of the Church—who are more cautious and deliberate. Tensions develop on both sides, varying according to the extent and effect of "dialogue" within each local Church. The mass of Catholics continue expressing their faith largely through popular devotions. The conservative clergy insists on respecting these expressions, and views with reluctance or

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dismay both religious innovations and the sharp social and political edge of such groups as "the priests of the Third World" in Argentina. For the progressives, however, such a conservative attitude amounts to whistling in the dark, while faith becomes increasingly irrelevant in today's secular world.

While dialogue and "liberation" ferment in the Church, most of the Latin American governments have come under authoritarian military control. Whether these tend to the Left or to the Right, they exercise strong control over the press and society. The Church, especially her liberation movements, is a prime target. There are frequent tensions which occasionally erupt into open conflict—sometimes because priests, nuns and lay Church leaders are jailed or deported; on other occasions when Bishops, singly or together, protest against social injustices or repression. Both liberals and Marxists agree in rejecting the "intrusion" of religion in the social and political domain. Most military leaders as well. This is part of the problem. While the Church struggles for a new understanding of her relationship to the world, most secular leaders continue to think of her and deal with her on the old nineteenth-century terms.

However this process of "Church and State," or, more in depth, "Church and the World" may develop, active Christians in Latin America are increasingly convinced that religion must speak to the vital issues of their people. The "theology of liberation" in Latin America takes many forms. But conscious Church leadership in Latin America agrees on the main point: that our people desire and deserve liberation, both internal and external, both temporal and eternal. This leads the Church to take official stands supporting national and Latin American demands for justice, for example in the control of their own natural resources; while at the same time the Church may find herself taking equally difficult stands in face of local injustices, which cause tensions and conflicts with local governments.

In short, the conviction has been irremediably established among Christians that they cannot live divorced from the temporal issues which so deeply affect their people. Fifty years ago, and even 30 years ago, this could hardly be said of most Catholics, even leading Catholics of Latin America. This is a remarkable change and constitutes, as one prominent Christian politician stated a few years ago, perhaps the principal political phenomenon of Latin America in this generation.

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IV

What, then, of the relations between the United States and Latin America? Are we, shall we be, friends or foes?

What is friendship between nations? We talk about inter-American relations in friendly terms—"Good Neighbor Policy," "Alliance for Progress," "People-to-People" programs. This goes well with traveling symphony orchestras, but does it describe the reality of the day-to-day economic, political and cultural relations between north and south? The facts say no.

It is a stark reality that 25 percent of the world's population are now consuming 75 percent of the world's goods. The United States with six percent of the world's population consumes over 30 percent of the world's goods. A child born in the United States will consume from 30 to 50 times more goods of all descriptions in his lifetime than one born in the highlands of Bolivia.

There is blatant waste in face of cruel want—within nations, and between nations and hemispheres. The accelerated uncontrolled consumption of "wastemaker" nations threatens to gradually extinguish not only flora and fauna, but also the prime materials necessary for modern civilization. High-level pollution in the developed nations threatens the health of their peoples, and of the peoples of the world.

The underlying world economic structure continues to be colonialist, in the sense that the developed nations export manufactured goods and import prime materials which usually come unprocessed, placing tariff restrictions upon the importation of processed or manufactured goods from the less-developed nations. Despite exceptions, the historical economic process tends to place a higher price on the manufactured goods and a relatively lower price on prime materials—to the continuing impoverishment of the poorer nations. Examples abound. Ironically the efforts of the prime producers—for instance, of crude oil—to exact a higher price from buyers to the north have roused pious cries of protest: "Extortion!" Suddenly northerners fear that they may have to "depend" on foreign producers. Do they ignore the extortion and economic dependence they exercise upon the poorer lands? This is "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" in international economics. But who set the rules for the game? The Christian nations to the north.

Objective economic reports establish an annual deficit for Latin America, in its trade with the United States, of approxi-

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mately three-quarters of a billion dollars. How can this be balanced by the bare \$300 million assigned annually by the United States for aid? The bulk of this is loan money, given at near commercial interest, which so heightens Latin American foreign indebtedness that some nations are hard pressed to cover their debts, even with new loans. A former U.S. AID director pointed out quite frankly, for the rest, that very little money is turned over in cash by AID. More than 80 percent is spent on its own personnel, on U.S. technical advisors, and on materials bought in the United States and shipped in U.S. bottoms. Even development loans at two percent interest can become exorbitantly expensive when the borrower must spend a large part of the monies on "services" which refund the monies into the U.S. economy.

The multilateral aid agencies should be completely free of these trammels. In fact, they are not. The Inter-American Development Bank, for example, determines its aid—mostly loans, most of them at semi-commercial rates—by vote. The United States has 40 percent of the voting power, a fact painfully felt by nations whose requests were turned down because they had nationalized previously U.S.-controlled interests.

This recalls the post-colonial issue of a nation's right to control its natural resources, a right affirmed by the United Nations and in Papal encyclicals. Washington manifests concern at the small capital control exercised within its own frontiers by foreign investors. But it finds it hard to understand the resentment, leading to government take-overs, toward U.S. or other foreign control in some of our nations of the bulk of industry and commerce, including that based upon prime natural resources.

One could go on and on. One could discuss the growing power of the multinational corporations—whose capital and production so far exceed that of the smaller nations (for example, the gross annual sales of General Motors are five times the gross national product of Peru). The consequences in economic-political power are obvious, especially when U.S.-based multinationals claim both benefits: national rights where they operate, and U.S. political support when they are threatened there.

One could discuss the tariff barriers which restrict the sale of Latin American manufactured or even processed prime goods to the north, thus perpetuating the colonialism of the past, in which the poorer nations grow poorer by helping the rich to grow richer.

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One could also point out the arbitrary determination of the world monies by the richer nations—with virtually no consultation with the poor. One could point out the technological and scientific interchange between the richer nations, with but crumbs for the poorer, which further widens the economic gap between them. And the yearly *increase* in the gross national product of the United States is usually greater than the entire GNP of India, a nation of 550 million people. The gap truly widens. How can this make for conditions of international peace?

What about military expenses? In 1970 they totaled world-wide \$204 billion, exceeding the total income of the poorest half of mankind. Ninety percent of this was spent by the richer nations, two-thirds by the United States and Russia. At their peak the U.S. war expenditures in Vietnam in one week surpassed the total U.S. annual AID program for Latin America. Is this “containing communism?”

Does the growing “entente” between Russia and the United States offer hope to the poorer nations? Perhaps, if it means less military expenditure and more control over nuclear weapons. But hardly in economic terms, given the fact that both nations have been grossly neglectful of international social and economic obligations: both decline year after year in their commitment to economic aid, falling very short of the one percent of GNP requested by the United Nations; both exercise “colonialist” economics in their principal trade areas. An understanding between them, on this basis, sends shivers through the underdeveloped world.

V

Arguments take on special meaning when applied to concrete situations. I therefore include here the key parts of a press statement on the Panama Canal issue which I gave on the occasion of the United Nations Security Council meeting held in Panama in March of this year.

The Church cannot stand aloof from these questions. . . . As Archbishop I wish to speak for the sake of peace and understanding. This peace is based on justice and truth. Justice, of course, contemplates all the parties involved in the Canal: Panama, the United States, and all the users of the Canal. . . .

Morally, the justice of the Panamanian position regarding the Canal and the Canal Zone is unquestionable.

Historically, its geographical location and configuration are Panama's prin-

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cial natural resource. In this connection, let us recall the declaration of the U.N. General Assembly (Resolution 3016, XXVII, 1961) that affirms the rights of every nation to control its natural resources for the sake of the development of its people. In his 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John repeated and underlined this principle, placing it in the context of international justice: "(Nations) have the right to play the leading part in the process of their own development. . . ." (92), and he continued: "no country may unjustly oppress others or unduly meddle in their affairs" (120).

In the light of these reasons, let us look at the Panama Canal Treaty of 1903. It establishes a monopoly in perpetuity, in favor of another government, over the principal natural resource of the Republic of Panama.

This treaty is, in fact, of dubious moral validity, since it was drafted without the participation of a single Panamanian, and was accepted by Panama under duress. Since then, and despite the seventy years that have passed in this century in which other peoples have achieved their independence, or have established their sovereignty over their territory and natural resources, this treaty has been kept essentially unchanged, at the insistence of the more powerful of the two signatories.

This is morally unacceptable; and as long as it continues, it is bound to keep on causing greater tensions.

Let us see some of the concrete effects of the situation thus created, which hinder the development of Panama:

- The existence of the Canal Zone deprives Panama of access to contiguous lands so that it can develop them in housing, agriculture, industry and commerce; and it divides the nation in such a way as to prevent its full physical, social, cultural, economic and political integration;
- The operation of the Canal according to norms established unilaterally by one of the parties has frozen tolls at the level set in 1914, thus limiting the income from the Canal to what barely covers operational costs and the payment of interest on the initial investment to the U.S. Treasury; and it denies to the other partner, Panama, what is due to it in potential income from the Canal;
- The exercise of jurisdictional powers by another government within the territory of a sovereign state is anachronistic in this last third of the 20th century; it is unnecessary for the efficient operation of the Canal; and it is offensive to the dignity of any nation.

These facts make the justice of Panama's position manifest, as it legitimately calls for abrogation of the present treaty, in order to:

- eliminate the perpetuity;
- extend full Panamanian sovereignty over the entire national territory;
- integrate the present Canal Zone with the rest of the country economically, culturally and politically;
- share in the direct income from the Canal and take advantage of the potential of its geographical position; all this, in such a way as to guarantee the efficient operation of the Canal and safeguard the legitimate interests of the United States, as well as those of all who use the interoceanic waterway.

Anyone who considers these and other factors closely and dispassionately

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will have to concede the justice of the basic aspiration of Panama. They certainly do not constitute a "campaign of hatred against the United States," as a U.S. Congressman unfelicitously stated a short while ago. Panama is a friendly people. But this people now calls upon the high dignitaries of the United States, who in the past as in the present have sincerely offered their support for the cause of international justice and aid to needy peoples, to translate their noble intentions into deeds in Panama.

For this purpose, the public must be told the real facts. Any distortion, any false representation of the facts prevents the understanding that we need. Many outlandish statements about the Canal have been appearing in newspapers abroad; in fact, a Catholic newspaper in the United States went so far as to say that the Canal Zone is a part of the federal union of the U.S.A.—and that its secession would be comparable to the secession of the Southern States that led to a Civil War in that nation a century ago.

It would be tragic for both nations, and for the hemisphere, were such a misreading of the reality to produce attitudes among the people of the United States that would prevent a mutual understanding.

Panama, with other member-nations of the Security Council, presented resolutions urging the solution of differences on the Canal issue. Of the 15 member-nations, 13 supported the resolutions, one abstained. The United States exercised its veto. Later, the U.S. delegation explained that it was not against the content of the resolutions, but rejected the effort of Panama to present a "bilateral" problem to a world forum. The question for Panama is whether a just solution of this bilateral problem is not being held up unilaterally.

VI

We return for a moment to the story of the little town in rural Panama. Can we accept the parallel?

Latin America is a vast and variegated collection of nations, large and small. There is much injustice within its borders, as in that little town. It must set its own house and family in order. But its task is collectively hindered by the situation of dependence, of inbuilt colonial injustice, in which, paradoxically, from its poverty it pays tribute to and supports the economy of the richer nations to the north. Just as do the campesinos in our tale, with respect to the townspeople.

Experts on inter-American relations know the facts. But the people of the United States do not. History, in U.S. schools, concentrates on the United States and its origins in northern Europe. Latin America is but a vague shadow cast by the yet black legend of Spain. U.S. news media—newspapers, radio, television

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—rarely carry any except the bizarre news about our countries: earthquakes, revolutions, or perhaps that a twelve-year-old girl in the Amazon gave birth to triplets. North Americans have a strong conviction that their government has given huge sums of money to our nations; that this money has been lost by corrupt and ineffective governments; that our people are hugely ungrateful for this largesse; that this foreign aid had best stop so that we learn to sink or swim by ourselves. Their attitudes are reflected in their lawgivers. President Nixon has spoken, more diplomatically to be sure, in these terms.

How does one break through these barriers—of ignorance (in a well-informed people), of indifference (in a generous people), of myth (in an otherwise pragmatic people)? Can U.S. news media be awakened to their public duty to inform, rather than to merely sell? Can U.S. public leaders be aroused to really lead in this vital area? To what extent is the indifference of the U.S. public and its leaders the result of a very anachronistic provincial spirit—that the United States can go it alone? To what extent is it the result of a press controlled by big business, which, for its benefits, creates and perpetuates the mythical image of the wealthy, generous Uncle Sam whose international kindness is so ungratefully abused?

One can appeal to high motives. There is much more at stake than economic injustice. The modern consumer society, of which the United States is the prime exemplar, follows so blindly the pied piper of high-powered salesmanship. The better life it is being sold, with solemn evangelical tones on every TV advertisement, is forcing it to live off the rest of the world and to sate itself with millions of fuming cars and endless hours of empty TV spectacles—in color, to be sure. Is this massification that much better than the Russian variety? Are not the signs of violence and protest and other social sicknesses eloquent enough a call for a return to higher ideals? Will the U.S. people learn to look beyond their borders and accept as a duty and an honor their world responsibility?

Or one can resort to convincing arguments of self-interest. The world is getting smaller, tighter and fuller, day by day. To paraphrase Lincoln, it cannot long remain one-third rich and two-thirds poor. There are wars, and rumors of greater wars. International peace cannot be had without a minimum of international equity. The world's resources are for all, and their use must be

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planned by all, or we will die fighting over the fragments. Concretely, the process of revolutionary change in that part of the Third World most closely dependent on the United States, namely Latin America, is underway. How radical it becomes, in its desperate grasp at a better life, or even a fairer deal, depends largely on the United States. If that nation's business interests, rather than the demands of justice and peace between peoples, continue to determine the relations of the entire nation toward Latin America, there are much darker days ahead.

The Catholic Church today strives to "incarnate" herself in every land, to identify herself with the problems and hopes of each people. Thirty years ago for us to speak of the "Chilean Church" or the "Spanish Church" or the "U.S. Church" would have smacked of schism. Today it is a commonplace. In Latin America the Church identifies herself more and more with the aspirations of each people and of the entire continent. She earnestly breathes spirit into justifiable nationalism.

But by her very Catholic nature, she cannot hold for strictly national Churches. Nothing would be more contrary to her Founder's teachings. It is the Church's mission, as it is of every world religion, especially today, to stress our oneness around the globe—if not as brothers, at least as very close neighbors who desperately need one another.

During Vatican Council II, a drafting committee inserted into a text of the Council the statement that men must consider themselves first of all citizens of the world, and then citizens of their individual nations. The statement was struck from the text, not because it was not urgently true, but because the authors feared it could not yet be understood.

The hour has rapidly come upon us in which we must understand and accept that statement. If we refuse to recognize equal rights for all men and for all nations, then not much time remains for us all on this small planet we inhabit together.