

# Editors See Latin Red Problem

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SAN DIEGO—Latin American editors view Communist subversion as the biggest problem in the Western Hemisphere, but they are not very enthusiastic about social reform as a means of coping with it.

Many also believe that the danger of Communist domination in the Dominican Republic is greater today than at the time of the American intervention last April.

These are the principal conclusions invited by the meeting of the Inter-American Press Association just completed here. Some 190 editors from North and South America were among the 400 participants.

## Effects of U. S. Policy

Talks with editors of many nationalities also lead to several other conclusions about the effect of American policy:

- There is a consensus that the Dominican intervention was necessary to forestall another Cuba, although some are critical of method and others blame the United States for not finishing the job.

- There is a general feeling that the recent critical speech by Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) raised unnecessary questions and had a mischievous effect because of his position as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. One Panamanian, however, commented that "Fulbright agreed with me."

- Opinion is sharply divided about the Selden resolution passed by the House of Representatives, which appeared to sanction unilateral military intervention to deal with Communist subversion. Some think that the effect of the resolution was exaggerated. Individual editors from Argentina, Honduras and Mexico reported no special concern in their localities. But the resolution caused impassioned reactions in Chile, Colombia, Panama and Peru, among other places.

## Views on Dominican Action

With respect to the Dominican intervention, one Ecuadorian editor remarked that many of the complaints could have been avoided "if President Johnson had just picked up the telephone and told

couple of Latin American presidents what he was doing and why. He would not even have needed to ask them. Or he could have done the same thing by calling in a few ambassadors."

Others, however, feel that the United States has been too apologetic and should not have stopped short. They shrug off Latin American criticism as often motivated by domestic political concerns, noting the tendency of some officials to talk one way in private and another in public.

Dominican editors in particular complained that the Communists had used the truce period to consolidate forces and train saboteurs. Three newspapers closed by the rebels last April—El Caribe, Listin Diario and Prensa Libre—have not yet been enabled to reopen under the provisional government, although an overly Communist organ, Patria, is flourishing.

Whether the preoccupation with Communist subversion rather than with reform is representative of general public opinion in Latin America is open to question.

## Conservative Editors

The IAPA includes such respected figures as Alberto Gainza Paz, editor and publisher of La Prensa of Buenos Aires which was closed by Peron, and Pedro Beltran, editor and publisher of La Prensa of Lima and former Prime Minister of Peru.

Nevertheless, Latin American editors who attend such conferences tend to be a pretty conservative lot. They vigorously applauded a speech by retired American Ambassador Ellis O. Briggs denouncing the emphasis on tax and land reform in the original concept of the Alliance for Progress as revolutionary and dangerous.

Some, however, may have been shy about expressing dissent. "If the man in the street gets the idea that the only people interested in helping him with his problems are the Communists," said one editor privately, "he will want to take their aid and Communist influence will be enhanced."

## Agricultural Need Seen

also came from Roberto Campos, Brazil's energetic Minister of Planning, who contended that "Fidelismo" has lost some of its menace. The great challenge to the Alliance for Progress, he asserted, is to improve agricultural productivity, to absorb rural masses becoming urbanized into national political life and to supplement economic aid with trade opportunities including higher prices for primary products.

But a tough speech by Under Secretary of State Thomas Mann was right in line with fears of Communist subversion. Mann also was applauded, although a few found him defensive or "not simpatico." The extraordinary lengths to which he went to reply to Fulbright attested how really nettled the Administration was by the criticisms, including those from sectors of the American press.

In effect, Mann denied that American policy on nonintervention has changed or that there is such a thing as the Johnson Doctrine. But he left dangling how the problem of subversion is to be countered speedily by collective means.

## Danger of Subversion

More emphatically, he insisted that the danger of subversion is real in "fragile" societies, and that any cooperation with the Communists is perilous. He quoted from President Kennedy to this effect:

What Mann really seemed to be saying is that reliance on reform through the democratic left is a mere slogan and is not enough to avoid subversion. The Hemisphere must look for leadership to strong anti-Communists such as former President Romulo Betancourt of Venezuela or to new forces emerging from the military, the church and organized labor.

How well such an essentially ideological prescription will capture public imagination is another question. At any rate it did not satisfy a Texas guest who described himself as a cousin of Mann and who provided one of the few notes of levity by charging that both his cousin and Campos had their speeches written for them.

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*Pres. Beltran, Pedro*  
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