

*Alejandro Peña Esclusa*

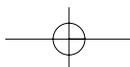
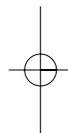
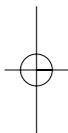
# THE CONTINENT OF HOPE

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## Acknowledgements

To all the countries of America,  
in reparation for the damage  
Hugo Chavez and his regime  
may have caused them...



## INDEX

Hope belongs to those who deserve it - by Olavo de Carvalho	5
Introduction	9
Fall and rise of communism	13
Expansion through the World Social Forum	21
Two different kinds of lefts?	27
There is no margin for another failure	31
Liberalism opens the way to Marxism	37
The I.M.F. and the rise of the left	43
Industrial or productive capitalism	47
How to make a successful economic program?	57
How to promote creativity?	67
The negative effects of the black legend	73
Recovering our historical identity	79
Latin American integration	91
Conclusion	97

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## Presentation to the Brazilian edition

# HOPE BELONGS TO THOSE WHO DESERVE IT

By: Olavo de Carvalho<sup>1</sup>

Since 1998, the Venezuelan engineer and entrepreneur Alejandro Peña Esclusa had a very clear vision of what was happening in his country. He knew that the rise of Hugo Chavez was not an isolated phenomenon, but the local expression of a neo-comunist strategy of continental dimensions, strongly backed by interests in Europe, the Islamic world and within the United States.

To fight against such a strategy, he said, it was not enough to launch isolated moralist denunciations, nor present a theoretical apologias of the virtues of capitalist democracy. It was necessary to promote a conscious and integral form of anticommunism, able to fight the enemy simultaneously in the political, moral and cultural fronts, and not only the political one. Specially, it was necessary to spiritually rescue the nation, opposing to communism –with courage and honesty–not with a vague liberalism or a non-political ethical discourse, but rather with traditional Judeo-Christian principles, which are the radical antithesis to the communist vision of the world.

Peña Esclusa's pioneering activities and warnings were essential factors to the creation of an opposition movement in Venezuela, capable of facing in the streets the dictators' bullyboys, denouncing him in the international media (efficiently countering the millions of dollars spent by the dictator in buying consciences in Europe and the United States), and promoting an electoral abstention cam-

paign that ended the little legitimacy that the Venezuelan dictatorship may still have.

The Venezuelan clarity and bravery notably contrasts the cool passiveness of the Brazilian people facing the cynical arrogance of the triumphant left. This is the result of the politicians' different reaction in Venezuela and Brazil with respect the Sao Paulo Forum and its continental revolution strategy.

With regards to us Brazilians, be it for fear, be it for convenience, or just because pure and simple comfort, but all supported by the most poised media, preferred –and still prefer– to close our eyes to such reality, and stick to the motto of “communism is over”, yielding to the moral black mail of the adversary while denying the very existence of the Sao Paulo Forum. Venezuelans could distinguish from the beginning who was telling the truth and who was telling lies. That's why they could react so soon.

This is why today, although the dictator is still in power, Alejandro Peña Esclusa can speak of Latin America as a Continent of Hope, whereas in Brazil the very word hope becomes more and more a monopoly of the official propaganda and no one else dares to pronounce it publicly without felling remorse.

Hope does not belong to those who desire it; it belongs to those who deserve it. Among Latin Americans, few deserve it more than the author of this book. Thanks to heroes like him, Venezuelans can begin to discuss plans for a Venezuela without Chavez.

With respect to Brazil, every vision of the future seems increasingly darkened by the shadow of the Lulas, the Stediles and the Marcolas<sup>2</sup>.

I speak with the double authority of who, since a decade and a half ago, has tried in vain to warn the people and the elites of Brazil about the cruel reality of the continental neo-communism and –due to my personal beliefs– cannot be in any way considered a follower to Alejandro Peña Esclusa. I hold so many objections to the economic stance he defends, that I feel even more eagerness to proclaim that we stand in front of a great man and a great example for all Latin America.

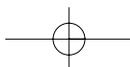
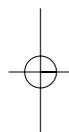
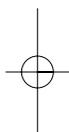
#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Brazilian philosopher ([www.olavodecarvalho.org/english](http://www.olavodecarvalho.org/english))

<sup>2</sup> Lula: Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva, President of Brazil

Stedile: Joao Pedro Stedile, Landless Battalions leader

Marcola: Marcos Willians Camacho, leader of a Brazilian criminal organization.



## INTRODUCTION

I have often asked myself why Popes Paul VI and John Paul II kept asserting that Latin America was the Continent of Hope. How could anyone expect anything from a region where poverty and underdevelopment prevail? Could they have used this term just to encourage us, or, can humanity really set their hopes on Latin America?<sup>1</sup>

In principle the answers seem pessimistic, because we haven't solved the problem of poverty nor reached a true political stability. On the contrary, countries such as Venezuela have fallen behind considerably by promoting a Castro-communist outline in the middle of the XXth century while in other Latin American countries, there is a strong tendency towards socialism. In this precarious condition, how can we think of helping other regions of the world?

But, our problems, fully considered, are not as complicated or difficult as those of other regions: there are no religious or racial confrontations, moreover we share a common religion and practically the same language; there is no lack of resources but rather overabundance; although there is misery, it does not reach the levels suffered in Africa; and, moral decay does not compare with that of developed countries. In fact, most of our problems could be solved by taking some relatively simple measures.

I firmly believe that the real obstacle in achieving Latin American development is of a psychological type of impediment: a collective flaw in self-esteem and a regrettable under estimation of our real capacity.

This explains why, even after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the

dismembering of the Soviet Union, there are still people who think the left is a solution.

Certainly, the traditional political currents have not ended poverty: on the contrary, the economic models applied by most of them, which have been based on the prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund, have worsened the situation. But, handing the power to the left is not the right response, for it constitutes literally a suicide, as we Venezuelans can bitterly testify.

I have, for eleven years, been fighting Hugo Chavez and the regional organization that backs him up, the Sao Paulo Forum, and that experience has allowed me to recognize the true face of the various socialist movements, including the one disguised as “modern and democratic”. I can assure you that all of them lead, although through different paths, to the same destiny: underdevelopment and internal confrontations.

The first object of this essay is to describe the project of the left in Latin America, so as to warn the people and continental institutions of the risks they will be subjected to if they follow their trends.

Secondly, to present an economic project capable of ending once and for all the scourge of poverty. This proposal is based on a very interesting research we have been developing on how countries such as the United States, Germany and Japan accomplished their industrialization.

The third objective is to expose what I consider to be a distortion of Latin American identity as well as proposal to correct this condition, all of which could lead to an exciting moral and cultural renaissance.

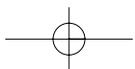
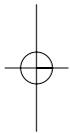
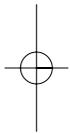
Though it may seem ambitious, the sum of the aforementioned, constitutes a project to bring to reality the slogan repeated so many times by John Paul II when referring to Latin America: The Continent of Hope!

THE AUTHOR

April 2006

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In the original Spanish version, the author uses the term Iberoamérica, instead of Latin America, referring to the countries founded by Spain and Portugal, both located in the Iberian Peninsula.



# 1. FALL AND RISE OF COMMUNISM



In general, empires, as well as ideologies, experience at first a rise and then a fall, but in the case of communism a different and interesting phenomenon has happened. After the tearing down of the Berlin wall, there has been an unexpected recovery, which has a lot to do with two organizations: the Sao Paulo Forum and the World Social Forum.

The communists who survived the 1989 disaster, carefully examined the mistakes committed by the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, especially those related to economy, while deciding to correct them, in order to remain in power and even expand, by disguising their ideology under other denominations.

The Chinese regime carried out the Tiananmen Plaza massacre and thus reaffirmed its totalitarian character but, simultaneously, opened the economy to a free market and established in this manner a mixed model: politically communist yet with a liberal economy. This permitted them maintain their government, while considerably increase their economic power.

On his part, Fidel Castro decided to grant foreigners preferential conditions so that they would invest their capitals in Cuba. This was a way of gaining time while reorganizing his forces. Furthermore, in July 1990, he created an organization called the Sao Paulo Forum<sup>1</sup>, with the help of the Brazilian Workers Party, so as to regroup all the regional left forces that were startled by the collapse of socialism.

With this maneuver Castro managed to put together all the regional socialist sectors, from the democratic parties such as the Mexican P.R.D. and the Uruguayan Frente Amplio (Wide Front) to guerrilla movements such as the Colombian FARC and ELN.

At the start, according to its founders' testimony, the Sao Paulo Forum "did not pretend to be a new international, nor an organized structure which imposes conditions to its participants, nor transmitter of unanimity"<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, through time, it has shown to be a political platform with a very well organized structure. It established a permanent means of communication, a centralized and coordinated activity system, a magazine called *America Libre*<sup>3</sup> and what is most important, a clearly defined objective: taking power over Latin America.

Shortly after its foundation, I received some information from the Sao Paulo Forum. I was impressed by the conjunction of Demo-

cratic groups with other groups linked to drug traffic and terrorism so I decided to carry out a follow up. I would read their declarations and documents periodically. Every time they held an international meeting I would take note of the attendants and the ideas discussed, and analyze their conclusions. It could be said that this was a mere academic interest or curiosity.

In December 1994, after his release from jail for his attempts to overthrow the government in 1992, Hugo Chavez traveled to Cuba, where he was received with state honors to seal publicly his alliance with Fidel Castro. Later, in May 1995, Chavez traveled to Montevideo to subscribe to the Sao Paulo Forum (SPF), which was holding its 5th meeting, therefore, my concern increased substantially. Even at that early point, I feared Chavez might reach the presidency of Venezuela with the help of the SPF and that he would return the favor financing it with abundant petrodollars and allowing it to take power in other nations, as it has actually happened.

But to my astonishment, hardly anybody was aware of the Forum's existence and the few that were acquainted with it did not consider it a threat. After the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, almost everyone considered its recovery to be practically impossible. It was at that moment when I took the decision to start a political crusade in order to warn Venezuelans and the rest of the world of the dangers in the ideas presented by the Sao Paulo Forum. I wrote reports, published articles, participated in opinion programs, traveled through Venezuela, went to Brazil, Colombia, The United States, El Salvador, Spain, among other countries.

In 1998 I published hundred of thousand copies of a newsletter

which was handed out all over Venezuela and the first lines were as follows:

A terrorist transnational, calling itself the Sao Paolo Forum, led by Fidel Castro and conformed by criminals, drug dealers, and murderers has in mind overtake Venezuela by assault very soon, and then use our territory to export the Cuban revolution to all of Latin America. The instrument to this macabre plan is Hugo Chavez<sup>4</sup>.

In 2000 I published a report entitled “What is the Sao Paolo Forum?”<sup>5</sup> and then a second one, “Radiography of the Sao Paolo Forum”<sup>6</sup> which were widely published internationally. There I described the new form of struggle adopted by communism, among them: first, the supposed defense of the rights of natives, as a way to cover the formation of guerrilla groups; second, the promotion of secessionism, arguing that the territories occupied by native tribes belong to them and not to the nation; third, a radical expression of ecology, which claims that the protection of the environment justifies terrorism against state activities in jungle zones; and, fourth, an extreme version of the so called liberation theology, with the purpose of dividing the Catholic Church and justifying violence with seemingly Christian arguments.

Since Chavez assumed the presidency in 1998, the Forum expanded considerably and its members or allies have taken over power in Brazil (2002), Argentina (2003), Uruguay (2004), Bolivia (2005), and Chile (2006).

In this very year 2006 elections will be held in Peru (April), Mexico (July), Ecuador (October), and Nicaragua (November) where the Sao Paolo Forum candidates lead the polls while Lula and Chavez intend a reelection in October and December respectively. In

Colombia, presidential elections will be held, but Alvaro Uribe, who has no connection to SPF, is expected to win.

According to the Sao Paulo Forum leaders, there is within the leftist organization,

(...) forces of the most diverse origins: some with eight decades of history and others of recent creation, Marxists and non Marxists, of social Christian inspiration -some identified with the Liberation Theory-, nationalistic groups or of anarchist roots, groups with or without socialistic definition with advanced and progressive democratic attitudes, sectors that have sprung from old historical parties, liberals, Social Democrats or Christian Democrats, organizations with a long history within the legal political system of their respective countries, others forced to an intensive underground path, among them some that have already gone through the armed approach <sup>7</sup>.

In their last encounter, held in 2005, 364 representatives of 150 political parties and social organizations from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Porto Rico, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Venezuela attended. In addition, there were entities and parties invited from Germany, Belgium, Canada, Catalonia, China, Spain, France, Galicia, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, and Vietnam.

#### THE FORUM'S DOUBLE STANDARD

After sixteen years of existence, there are sufficient elements to judge the actions of the SPF. It can no longer claim that this is a discussion and theoretical disquisition forum since many of its members hold important government positions. Since its foundation, the Sao Paulo Forum has been characterized by a series of contradictions, which have only deepened with the time.

The Sao Paulo Forum makes democracy its banner but at the same time defends the Cuban revolution, which is rejected throughout the whole world for being a relentless dictatorship that has murdered and imprisoned thousands of its opponents, and with no afterthought cut-off liberty and the free expression of its citizens. Chavez has followed the Cuban example persecuting and imprisoning his opponents and, controlling all the branches of powers, in order to guarantee his permanency in government, with the Forum not only ignoring this but quite on the contrary, applauding his actions.

The SPF verbally opposes terrorism and violence, yet within its ranks there are guerrilla groups such as FARC and ELN, which exercise terrorism and violence daily. It also condemns drug traffic, yet there are undeniable proofs of the connections of some of its members with the production and commercialization of narcotics, the most conspicuous being the Colombian guerrilla movements. As a matter of fact, during the seven year government of Chavez, the relationship with FARC has become closer and of mutual collaboration.

Not all the members of the SPF identify with the armed fight and the illegal procedures used by the most radical members of the Forum. Nevertheless, instead of separating from them and publicly denouncing them, they sit at the same table and share the same action strategies. This attitude is based in pure pragmatism and shows a lack of solid principles, and its identical to that of the traditional political groups they claim to oppose.

The Forum rejects corruption, but when its members reach power, they don't fight it, but rather foster it, as seen in Brazil and Ve-

nezuela, where personal enrichment of public workers and illegal financing for their continental expansion plans is evident.

Many leaders of the Sao Paulo Forum present themselves as anti imperialists, but then they subordinate their country's interests to those of Castro-communism. To achieve this they first destroy the state institutions. In seven years of government, Chavez has kidnapped the institutions and turned them into political action machines at the service of another form of imperialism: the Cuban.

The first banner raised by the Sao Paulo Forum is the fight against neo-liberalism, claiming that with this model "elites can accumulate wealth at the expense of further growth of poverty"<sup>8</sup> and assures that the organization is the "popular and democratic alternative to neo-liberalism"<sup>9</sup>. But, after forty-seven years in government, Fidel Castro has created his own elite surrounded with privileges, while the rest of the Cubans live in the most absolute misery. On his part, after seven years in government and with the highest petroleum revenues in the history of Venezuela, Chavez regime has increased the levels of poverty, unemployment and malnutrition; instead, a new economic elite –millionaire and neo-liberal– has appeared, and has become wealthy at the expense of the state.

So many contradictions show that the only intention of the members of the Sao Paulo Forum is to take power, and not to solve the problems of the destitute, whose exclusive representation they claim, but only to profit from them. Ironically, those who suffer the most harm are the poor who, besides from suffering a new disappointment, keep on experiencing the dearth of under-development to an even higher degree.

## NOTES

All references in this book are taken from the Spanish version and most of them have not an English translation. Nevertheless, we decided to include them (translating just the titles), so the reader can have access to the original source. Certain electronic links expired, but we indicate the year when they were consulted.

<sup>1</sup> The Sao Paulo Forum's web page is [www.forosaopaulo.org](http://www.forosaopaulo.org)

<sup>2</sup> Baráibar, C. Bayardi, J. (2000). *El Foro de San Pablo, ¿Qué es y cuál es su historia?*. (What is the Sao Paulo Forum and which is its history?). [www.asamblea.org.uy](http://www.asamblea.org.uy) [July, 2000].

<sup>3</sup> América Libre's web page is [www.nodo50.org/americalibre](http://www.nodo50.org/americalibre)

<sup>4</sup> Peña, Alejandro. *El plan del Foro de Sao Paulo para conquistar Venezuela*. (The Sao Paulo Forum's plan to conquer Venezuela). [1988].

<sup>5</sup> Peña, Alejandro. *¿Qué es el Foro de Sao Paulo?*. (What is the Sao Paulo Forum?). [www.fuerzasolidaria.org](http://www.fuerzasolidaria.org). [2000]

<sup>6</sup> Peña, Alejandro. *Radiografía del Foro de Sao Paulo*. (Radiography of the Sao Paulo Forum). [www.fuerzasolidaria.org](http://www.fuerzasolidaria.org). [2000]

<sup>7</sup> Baráibar, C. Bayardi, J. (2000). *El Foro de San Pablo, ¿Qué es y cuál es su historia?*. (What is the Sao Paulo Forum and which is its history?). [www.asamblea.org.uy](http://www.asamblea.org.uy) [Julio, 2000].

<sup>8</sup> IX Meeting of the Sao Paulo Forum. Managua, Nicaragua. [www.asamblea.org.uy](http://www.asamblea.org.uy) [Feb. 2000].

<sup>9</sup> Foro de Sao Paulo. *Breve histórico del Foro de Sao Paulo*. (Historical briefing of the Sao Paulo Forum). [www.forosaopaulo.org](http://www.forosaopaulo.org). [March 2006].

## 2. EXPANSION THROUGH THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM



Simultaneous to the Sao Paulo Forum, the left launched another initiative of international growth: the World Social Forum (WSF). For this end it summoned its first meeting at the city of Porto Alegre in January 2001.

According to its declaration of principles, the object of the World Social Forum was to oppose the “globalization, neo-liberalism, and the domain of the world through capital or any other form of imperialism”<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, even though it was not directly stated, the World Social Forum promotes another type of globalization and imperialism, but with socialist em-

blems, a subterfuge that in practice disguises its communist character.

This predisposition was evident immediately after the inaugural session, when the attendants carried out a demonstration through the center of Porto Alegre carrying flags with the sickle and hammer, portraits of Lenin and screaming slogans in favor of communist Cuba and the Colombian guerrilla.

The World Social Forum criticizes, and rightly so, the existing injustice in the world and the negative aspects of capitalism while at the same time it promotes a series of Marxist postulates such as the struggle of classes, disapproval of private property and the destruction of the traditional forms of social organization.

The WSF claims that it is not an institution to obtain power and for that reason does not include among its participants party representations<sup>2</sup>, yet while the first World Social Forum was being held, the first World Parliamentary Forum was also carried out, with the attendance of 400 leftist legislators from 30 countries. In that meeting it was announced the constitution of an international network to ensure that the proposals emanated from the WSF would have “a real legislative translation”.

Even when the World Social Forum may declare that it doesn't seek power, in practice it opens the way to socialist and communist parties. This action operates at three levels: the philosophical, which promotes a materialistic cosmic view of man and history, the political, which carries out an intense propagandistic activity to discredit and attack its opponents; and the psychological, by carrying out street protests of great virulence, to terrify any opposing sector.

For a few years now, each time the heads of State belonging to the G8 (group of the eight most industrialized countries) held their meetings in a certain city, the World Social Forum organized street protest to sabotage such meetings. A particularly violent demonstration was carried out in July 2001 in Genoa, Italy, which ended in vandalism, dozens of injured and one dead.

Lately, they protested not only against the G8 but also against meetings where any adversary may be present. In November 2005, sectors belonging to the WSF led by Hugo Chavez, organized in Mar del Plata, Argentina, a parallel summit to the IV Summit of the Americas, where the president of the United States, George Bush was participating. There were violent protests which turned into vandalism, looting and fires.

The World Social Forum promotes confrontation and anarchy. As expressed in an editorial of the *Cristiandad* magazine dated February 19th 2002, the World Social Forum

(...) has managed to weave an amazing net of organizations and activists in 5 continents, complementing each other and joining forces which up to now, didn't seem connected. The only variation from the previous left movements is the addition of anarchy and chaos. This new left, carries the banner of aggressive rebellion; it aims to end all authority, hierarchy, order or morality; its purpose is to devastate everything in order to create an egalitarian, anarchical society similar to the most backward tribes<sup>4</sup>.

The editorial concludes by saying "...this is the old sophism of the two headed coin"; exposing the blunders of capitalism, they offer as an alternative the faults of socialism, while "excluding a third possibility", a healthy capitalism based on production, scientific development and social justice.

### LIBERATION THEOLOGY

It is surprising that a few years after the disastrous failure of communism in the Soviet Bloc, socialism has gathered such strength as seen in the Sao Paulo Forum and the World Social Forum. This is due, among other reasons, to the support of the Liberation Theology.

One of the chief promoters of the World Social Forum is Francisco “Chico” Whitaker, Director of the Committee of Justice and Peace of the Brazilian Catholic Bishops National Conference. Another personality is the Dominican priest Frei Betto, counselor to Fidel Castro, author of the book “*Fidel and Religion*”, and for many years director of the magazine *America Libre*, the medium of diffusion for the Sao Paulo Forum.

In January 2005 the first World Forum of Liberation Theology was held, within the framework of the V World Social Forum, in Porto Alegre, with an attendance of 175 theologians from the five continents. At the meeting the Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff, member of the Editorial Board of the magazine *America Libre*, played a leading role.

It seems absurd that the Catholic Church, one of the institutions which fought most against Marxism, should be used to give the World Social Forum a varnish of spirituality, which only helped to recruit thousands of gullible youths. We have to explain though, that it is not the institution itself, which was represented, but a current which infiltrated it and uses the name of the Church to promote this political project.

On August 6th 1984, the Vatican strongly condemned the Libera-

tion Theology through a document issued by the congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, presided by the present Pope Joseph Ratzinger.

The document, entitled *Libertatis Nuntius* (On Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation) is meant to

(...) draw the attention of pastors, theologians, and all the faithful to the deviations, and risks of deviation, damaging to the faith and to Christian living, that are brought about by certain forms of liberation theology which use, in an insufficiently critical manner, concepts borrowed from various currents of Marxist thought<sup>5</sup>.

Later it warns, "Let us recall the fact that atheism and the denial of the human person, his liberty and rights, are at the core of the Marxist theory". The theology of liberation

(...) go on to a disastrous confusion between the 'poor' of the Scripture and the 'proletariat' of Marx. In this way they pervert the Christian meaning of the poor, and they transform the fight for the rights of the poor into a class fight within the ideological perspective of the class struggle<sup>6</sup>.

As explained the editorial in the *Cristiandad* magazine, the World Social Forum has taken the Marxist concept of class struggle to world scale: it covers not only the class struggle between employers and employees, but

(...) rich countries against poor countries, economic blocs against each other, productive continents against consumer continents, impoverished worlds against developed worlds, farm workers against land owners, feminists against the family, all kinds of immoralists against honest people, drug addicts against reasonable people, laymen against clergymen, lay people in opposition to ecclesiastic hierarchy, citizens against the State, etc.<sup>7</sup>

The socialist materialism promoted by the WSF has found fertile soil for expansion in the West since the hemisphere has fallen vic-

tim to another type of materialism based on hedonism and individualism, a topic which we will examine further on.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> World Social Forum Charter of Principles, [www.forumsocialmundial.org.br](http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br) [2006].

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Guimaraens, G. *Foro Social Mundial: laboratorio de la subversión*. (World Social Forum: laboratory of subversion). [www.cubdest.org/0206/gfsm.html](http://www.cubdest.org/0206/gfsm.html) [2006].

<sup>4</sup> Cristiandad. *Con el pretexto antiglobalización, el anarcosocialismo que hoy renace*. (With the excuse of anti-globalization, the anarco-syndicalism comes back to life). ([www.cubdest.org/0206/cfsmcrist.html](http://www.cubdest.org/0206/cfsmcrist.html)) [2006].

<sup>5</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation"*.

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc-con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19840806\\_theology-liberation\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc-con_cfaith_doc_19840806_theology-liberation_en.html) [2006].

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Cristiandad. *Con el pretexto antiglobalización, el anarcosocialismo que hoy renace*. (With the excuse of anti-globalization, the anarco-syndicalism comes back to life). ([www.cubdest.org/0206/cfsmcrist.html](http://www.cubdest.org/0206/cfsmcrist.html)) [2006].

### 3. TWO DIFFERENT KINDS OF LEFTS?



It is a great subject of concern that wide sectors of North and South America underestimate the problem presented by the growth of socialism in Latin America by believing the claim that there are two different kinds of lefts: a good left and a bad one.

For example, the journalist Andrés Oppenheimer assures that there are two socialist tendencies, one “modern, responsible and global” such as those in Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay and the other “populist and reactionary” as in Venezuela and Bolivia. According to Oppenheimer, there isn’t a “radical leftist Tsunami in Latin America” but a “series of waves going in all directions and sometimes clashing against each other”<sup>1</sup>.

The North American ex Sub Secretary of State Otto Reich, does not see problems in the governments of Chile, Brazil or Uruguay because –although socialist– they “respect human rights and political freedom” and gear their economies towards free trade –as opposed to the Cuban and Venezuelan governments<sup>2</sup>.

Undoubtedly, there are great differences and even conflicts between the two lefts, but it is also true that in spite of their “democratic” condition, Lula, Kirchner, and Tabaré Vázquez never condemn the terrible violations of human rights and political liberties committed by Castro and Chavez. On the contrary, they cover them up, minimize them and sometimes endorse them. Definitely, they behave as allies; so, the non-democratic left advances and grows under the obliging look of the other left, as demonstrated with the victory of Evo Morales in Bolivia. As a matter of fact, the two lefts coexist comfortably in the Sao Paulo Forum and the World Social Forum.

The Venezuelan socialist leader Teodoro Petkoff gives the clue to understanding this apparent contradiction:

For the modern and democratic left...receiving Fidel and Chavez with honors, giving them a cordial treatment and opening the doors for them to popular masses, paying tribute to their character, considering them part of the family is a form of loyalty with their own history (all of us were pro soviet and/or Fidelists, we are no strangers to the beloved Guevara myth and to different degrees everyone has gone through Marxism-Leninism)<sup>3</sup>.

“Furthermore” –adds Petkoff– “there is a cohesive factor for the two lefts: the North American external policy in general and particularly with Latin America and the Caribbean”<sup>4</sup>. According to Petkoff, the two lefts reject “the stupid gringo policy” to Fidel Castro and feel “sympathy raised by little David facing the giant Goliath”<sup>5</sup>.

Its connections are not limited to a common past or “sympathy”, but to the fact that they are still united by the same philosophical concepts.

Marxism is not only an economic plan but a cosmic view, a global concept of man and universe which affects all human environment: his way of being, thinking, acting and even feeling, something which does not disappear when some of the premises are changed. This is a materialistic cosmic view that radically denies human transcendence and condemns the individual to his own finite existence.

It’s natural that after perceiving the failure of the Marxist economy, wide sectors of the left have decided to “modernize” and discard some of the original statements, even transfer to the neo liberal faction, but it is also true most of them continue to be philosophically and morally Marxist, that is, they are still trapped by materialism. And, as we will see further on, no project of materialistic character will be able to solve the serious problems of the region.

#### NOTES

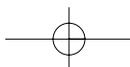
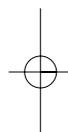
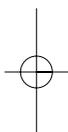
<sup>1</sup> Oppenheimer, A. *La falacia del bloque izquierdista latinoamericano*. (The fallacy of the leftist Latin American front) [www.miami.com/mld/elnuevo/news/columnists/andres\\_oppenheimer/13628883.htm](http://www.miami.com/mld/elnuevo/news/columnists/andres_oppenheimer/13628883.htm). [2006].

<sup>2</sup> Blanco, I. Reich: *El futuro podría ser oscuro*. (Reich: the future may be dark) [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/spanish/latin\\_america/newsid\\_4544000/4544158.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/spanish/latin_america/newsid_4544000/4544158.stm) [2006].

<sup>3</sup> Petkoff, T. (2005). *Dos izquierdas*. (Two lefts). Caracas. Alfadil Ediciones, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 29.



## 4. THERE IS NO MARGIN FOR ANOTHER FAILURE



Although my formal education in college was engineering, long ago I decided to dedicate all my energy and efforts in understanding economic processes and how they affect particular nations.

It all started in February 1983, with the first devaluation of the Bolivar. I was then 29 and owner of a successful construction company. There was a promising future ahead of me, as for many other Venezuelans with a university degree and enthusiasm for growth.

The devaluation put an end to my expectations and changed my perspective of life, more than anything else because I sensed that it

was only the start of an economic disaster, preceded by a series of devaluations, which actually happened. I could not understand how such a rich and strong country could collapse in such a way, so I decided to explore.

As years went by I could detect that this was not a Venezuelan anomaly but a phenomenon that affected all Latin American nations, and that was caused by wrong economic policies. Be it Mexico, Brazil, or Argentina, the economic deterioration was identical and the causes were basically the same, all of them related to liberal thought and resulting from International Monetary Fund prescriptions, a topic to be discussed later.

Economic wreck created political earthquakes. During the last ten years, the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and other nations have fallen through non-electoral mechanisms, that is, through revolts and street protests that fortunately did not degenerate into civil wars.

The left turn that Latin America is experiencing is not because our people believe in the false promises of socialism; it's rather due to the failures of liberalism. The people, disappointed and exhausted by hunger and misery, decided to give the Marxists a chance, not because they trust them but to get rid of the traditional politicians. But, to their misfortune, the left will continue to implement the same measures, in spite of its anti neo liberal discourse.

Lula's economic plans differ little from those of his predecessors –except for a larger corruption- because, as I explained previously, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the left adopted a neo-liberal model keeping the rest of its socialist ideology intact. And it is natural

that it should be this way, because socialism has nothing new to offer. If it had, it would have expressed itself in the Soviet Bloc.

Petkoff confirms this in his book *The Two Lefts*,

Forced now by circumstances to assume the outlines of the economic policies of the government of ex President Fernando Henrique Cardoso –those that he demagogically denounced as neo-liberal from the opposition– Lula lives now through the logical retraction of his left wing, anchored in the pseudo-revolutionary mythology and unable to understand that there is no free lunch, and that social change is not just a matter of will or good intentions<sup>1</sup>.

With those words Petkoff justifies the metamorphosis of Marxism to remain in power with a mixed plan, politically socialist and economically liberal.

But, after so many years of accumulated social and economical deterioration, there is no margin left for another failure. If the continental left turn ends in a new disappointment, which seems feasible, the condition of instability will worsen and the probabilities of social confrontation will notably increase. To prevent such a disaster, it is imperative to stop this absurd leftist experiment and implement as soon as possible a development program –like the one sketched below– in order to stabilize the whole region in a definite way.

#### THE RIGHT TO REBEL

As far as the leftist “democratic” governments are concerned, the Lula and Kirchner cases for instance, the most appropriate course of action is to defeat them through electoral mechanisms. On the other hand, to displace authoritarian socialist regimes which prevent the development of free and transparent elections, it is necessary to

use other constitutional mechanisms instead, such as for example, civil disobedience or civil resistance.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10th 1948, clearly establishes that “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures”. (Article 21, numeral 3). When a fundamental right such as this is not guaranteed, the preamble of this Declaration establishes “recourse to rebellion against tyranny and oppression”<sup>2</sup>.

Just as an individual has the right to exercise legitimate defense against arbitrary and unfair aggression, so do people, because natural right extends to all rational creatures and in consequence, to the human collective.

In his work *Summa Theologica* Saint Thomas explains

A tyrannical government is not just, because it is directed, not to the common good, but to the private good of the ruler. Consequently there is no sedition in disturbing a government of this kind... Indeed it is the tyrant rather that is guilty of sedition, since he encourages discord and sedition among his subjects<sup>3</sup>.

Almost all Latin American countries contemplate in their respective constitutions the right to disregard –and disobey– tyrannical regimes. In the case of Venezuela, Article 350 of the Constitution states that

The People of Venezuela, in keeping with its republican tradition, its fight for independence, peace and liberty, shall disregard any regime, legislation or authority that contradicts democratic values, principles and guaranties or that diminishes the human rights<sup>4</sup>.

Presently, the application of Article 350 is fully justified, because, even though Chavez reached the presidency in 1998 through free elections, since then, he has evolved into a tyrant by committing crimes against humanity, kidnapping public powers, cutting off liberties, committing electoral fraud and subordinating the nation to Fidel Castro.

In June 2005 I published a book entitled 350<sup>5</sup> with the idea of explaining to Venezuelans the significance of this Article and presenting a strategy to implement it throughout the nation. In the book I also explained that Article 333 of the Venezuelan Constitution obliges not only civilians but also the Armed Forces to intervene to restore the State of Right when it has been violated.

This Constitution” –states the Article– “shall not lose effect if it were not observed due to act of force or it were derogated by any other means different to those foreseen by it. In such contingency every citizen invested or not with authority, shall have the duty to collaborate in the reestablishment of its effective enforcement<sup>6</sup>.

In 2004 Chavez lost the Referendum held to revoke his post, but the results were altered. Through tricks and threats he prevented an open vote counting. Since then, he ceased to be a legitimate president. He keeps himself in power by flagrantly violating the Constitution. According to our legal ordinance, the Armed Forces would be constitutionally required to intervene and restore legitimacy.

Nevertheless, this resource –although a constitutional duty– is not well seen by the international community due to fear of repeating bad experiences of the past when military governments violated human rights.

But, apart from these bad experiences, Latin American history

contains examples of military intervention where, far from damaging democracy, they have reestablished and consolidated it, as in the civic-military intervention that overthrew Marcos Perez Jimenez in 1958, which originated decades of democratic government in Venezuela.

Recently there have been other examples of generalized civic disobedience, backed in their final stages by the Armed Forces, which have forced the ruler in office to submit to the will of the majorities, as seen in the cases of Raul Cubas in Paraguay, Alberto Fujimori in Peru and Lucio Gutierrez in Ecuador, just to mention three. These cases should serve as example in other countries where authoritarian regimes have turned into tyrannies.

However, displacing such governments is not the only measure to be taken since, as we will see in the next chapter, if the moral and economic reasons originating the problem are not dealt with as well, these types of governments will tend to reappear.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Petkoff, T. (2005). *Dos izquierdas*. (Two lefts). Caracas. Alfadil Ediciones, p 75.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. <http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part II – II, question 42. <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/304202.htm>

<sup>4</sup> *Constitución de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela (1999)*. (Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela). Art. 350. [www.constitucion.ve/constitucion.pdf](http://www.constitucion.ve/constitucion.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Peña A. (2005). 350. Caracas. Ediciones Fuerza Productiva. [www.fuerzasolidaria.org](http://www.fuerzasolidaria.org)

<sup>6</sup> *Constitución de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela (1999)*. (Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela). Art. 333. [www.constitucion.ve/constitucion.pdf](http://www.constitucion.ve/constitucion.pdf)

## 5. LIBERALISM OPENS THE WAY TO MARXISM



There is a generalized belief according to which Marxism and liberalism are opposites and mutually exclusive. For one to exist, it must neutralize the basic axioms of the other, as stated, for instance in the declarations of the Sao Paolo Forum and the World Social Forum against neo liberalism. Never the less, one of the surprises I encountered while investigating how the rules of economy function, was discovering the philosophical similarity between the two currents, more than anything else in their materialistic cosmic view.

Both Marxism and liberalism deny the transcendence of man,

condemning the individual to his own finite existence. Both currents deny the existence of universal truths and –as a consequence– of an absolute concept of good and bad; they only recognize the existence of relative values, which depend on circumstances and the times.

Another surprise was discovering that economic liberalism opens the way to Marxism, although Pope Leon XIII had already warned about that phenomenon at the end of the 19th century.

According to liberalism, the motivations of man are similar to those of animals; human beings seek progress only to satisfy their material aspirations or –in other words– for selfish reasons. Thus, society has to leave the spontaneous forces of the individual –although stimulated by selfishness– be the main engine of the economy, without any moral intervention.

As a consequence of this system of thinking, liberals try to stop all state interference, leaving economy adrift and trusting “spontaneous order”, which they call “the invisible hand”. But such line of thought does not take into account that individual and collective interests are not always the same.

When there is no moral reference, financial and monetary speculation, the indiscriminate opening to imported goods, the unjustified raise of interest rates and other “spontaneous” practices, based only on ambitions and disproportional profits, end up favoring the interests of powerful international monopolies –coincidentally, many of which promote liberalist ideologies– against the interest of the poorest.

Leftist groups take advantage of the misery caused by this model

to launch a discourse based on social hatred and class struggle, which is welcomed by the masses resented by injustice. Thus the pendulum moves from liberalism to Marxism and back, generating a vicious circle.

This pendulous movement has been particularly evident in Latin America, a region that has in fact served as a laboratory to experiment diverse variables of the two tendencies.

#### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH INTERVENES

The Catholic Church has denounced this vicious circle through a series of documents and Encyclicals, which together conform the Social Doctrine of the Church. The first, *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of the Working Classes), was written in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII and explains that “The hiring of labor and the conduct of trade are concentrated in the hands of comparatively few; so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery”<sup>1</sup>.

“To remedy these wrongs” –Pope Leo XIII writes–

(...) the socialists, working on the poor man’s envy of the rich, are striving to do away with private property, and contend that individual possessions should become the common property of all... But their contentions are so clearly powerless to end the controversy that were they carried into effect the working man himself would be among the first to suffer. They are, moreover, emphatically unjust, for they would rob the lawful possessor, distort the functions of the State, and create utter confusion in the community<sup>2</sup>.

Nine decades later, the problem raised by Leo XIII had not been solved, on the contrary, it had terribly worsened, because socialism had taken shape, conforming power structures, which governed the

Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and also threatened to confront the West with nuclear war.

In 1987, two years before the fall of the Berlin wall, Pope John Paul II presented his encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (On Social Concern) where he repeats what was said by Leo XIII:

(...) how can one justify the fact that huge sums of money, which could and should be used for increasing the development of peoples, are instead utilized for the enrichment of individuals or groups... Peoples excluded from the fair distribution of the goods originally destined for all could ask themselves: why not respond with violence to those who first treat us with violence? And if the situation is examined in the light of the division of the world into ideological blocs a division already existing in 1967 –and in the light of the subsequent economic and political repercussions and dependencies, the danger is seen to be much greater<sup>3</sup>.

Pope John Paul II adds, “In the West there exists a system which is historically inspired by the principles of the liberal capitalism... In the East there exists a system inspired by the Marxist collectivism... Each of the two blocs harbors in its own way a tendency towards imperialism”<sup>4</sup>. Which is not mere chance because in spite of their differences, liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism spring up from the same materialistic conception.

To solve this conflict, John Paul II proposes in his document

(...) to change the spiritual attitudes which define each individual’s relationship with self, with neighbor, with even the remotest human communities, and with nature itself; and all of this in view of higher values such as the common good... (this) change of behavior or mentality or mode of existence is called “conversion,” to use the language of the Bible<sup>5</sup>.

John Paul II clarifies that “The Church does not have technical revolutions to offer for the problem of underdevelopment as such...

does not propose economic and political systems or programs, nor does she show preference for one or the other, provided that human dignity is properly respected and promoted”<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, he repeats Pope Paul VI’s famous phrase: “Development is the new name for peace”.

To diminish the negative consequences of the economic plans, there came into being the mixed models: some called “third way”, others “capitalism with a human face”, etc. but none solved the problem, they simply served as “wet towels”, because they were all based on the same conceptual and philosophical premises aforementioned.

Humanity needs a totally different economic model, one that definitely put an end to the vicious circle generated by the Marxism-liberalism binomial. In my opinion, Alexander Hamilton’s productive model, presented in chapter 7, achieves this task wonderfully, apart from complying with the double condition demanded by the Church: respecting man’s dignity while ensuring development.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Pope Leo XIII. *Rerum Novarum*, Encyclical Letter. Art. 1.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_15051891\\_rerum-novarum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html) [2006].

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Art. 2.

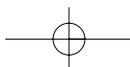
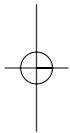
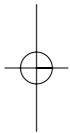
<sup>3</sup> Pope John Paul II. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Encyclical Letter. Art. 10.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987\\_sollicitudo-rei-socialis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html) [2006].

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Art. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, Art. 38.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, Art. 41.



## 6. THE IMF AND THE RISE OF THE LEFT



In Latin America, it has been particularly obvious that liberalism opens the way to Marxism.

One of the practical applications of liberal thought, as far as state policies are concerned, is the recipe of the International Monetary Fund.

The idea of creating the IMF started in 1944, during a United Nations conference held in Bretton Woods (New Hampshire, USA), where the participants of 45 countries agreed on establishing a framework of cooperation to prevent another great depression such as the one that occurred in the thirties. Nevertheless, the solutions proposed by the International Monetary Fund are solely

and exclusively of a monetary nature, focused –above all– on reducing fiscal deficits.

When a government spends more than it obtains, then it develops what is called a fiscal deficit. The IMF recommends eliminating it through: 1) expense reduction (budget cuts), 2) increasing income (higher taxes), and 3) the sale of national assets (privatizations).

The budget cuts are almost always associated with layoffs, which mean increase unemployment. The increase of taxes diverts resources, which could have been destined to productive investment. And privatizing companies, mean doing away with important sources of incomes to pay monthly expenses (if state companies are badly managed, the solution is not always selling, but reorganizing).

Although, during a brief period, these recommendations may seem to produce budgetary improvement, they halt productive activity (that's why they are called recessive) and cause, in the end, an even greater fiscal deficit, many times accompanied with social unrest powered by leftist sectors.

One of the most impressive ones occurred in February 1989, in Caracas, when the government of Carlos Andres Perez tried to apply the IMF measures without counterbalances. In his speeches, Chavez has identified this date as the start of his ascent to power.

But there have been many others. In January 2000, in Ecuador, the government of Jamil Mahuad was overthrown by an indigenous rebellion against the IMF. In December 2001, in Argentina, hundreds of thousands rebelled against the economic policies of the president Fernando de la Rúa, overthrowing him of power just a few days later.

The same happened in Bolivia in 2003 with the government of Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, prompting Evo Morales to power.

As I am writing these lines, an indigenous protest in Ecuador, caused by the *Tratado de Libre Comercio* (Free Trade Treaty) threatens to overthrow the government. The protesters are headed by the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas – CONAIE (Indigenous Nationalities Confederation), organization belonging to the Sao Paulo Forum.

#### HOW CAN FISCAL DEFICIT BE ELIMINATED

In medical terms, deficit could be compared with a fever that reflects an infection. A patient is never cured only by reducing the fever (that is, “balancing” the money figures) as pretended by the International Monetary Fund, but by getting rid of the infection.

Fiscal deficit is eliminated by reactivating the economy, generating full employment and producing sound prosperity, all of which turns afterwards into plentiful income for the state through taxes on profit and rent. A suitable strategy consists, then, of taxing the profits of thousands of prosperous companies that could exist rather than strangling the few weakened companies that remain at a certain moment.

The most efficient way to reactivate economy and generate full employment is by increasing the nation’s productivity. This is accomplished, in the first place, through the construction of works of infrastructure related to road and railroad transportation, electricity and water supply, etc., because they create the platform on which the rest of the economy prospers.

There is no real impediment in carrying out the great infrastructure projects needed by the Latin American nations. The argument generally used to rebuff this proposal is of monetary character. It is claimed that there are not enough resources in the budget to pay for them.

But no nation in the world has become industrialized through the national budget resources: the United States, Germany and Japan, to mention just three examples, turned into industrial powers resorting to internal credit, that is, emitting bank notes or state bonds to mobilize the productive forces of the nation.

The International Monetary Fund claims that issuing money is an automatic mechanism to generate inflation. This is true when it is used to pay for common expenses such as salaries and services; or when it is used to pay for sumptuary goods or to feed speculation, as it is happening nowadays.

But, when money is created solely to finance production of goods, then the monetary mass increases together with the mass of products, so money does not lose its value; or to put it in other words, it does not create inflation.

There is no problem then in coining money or emitting state papers to finance works when and if there is sufficient production potential (raw material, skilled labor and technology) to construct them. The works, once executed, provide real value to printed money.

## 7. INDUSTRIAL OR PRODUCTIVE CAPITALISM



In his book *Bolívar*, the renowned Colombian writer Indalecio Liévano Aguirre says that the *Liberator*<sup>1</sup> should have had by his side a man like Alexander Hamilton, which is why Latin America did not reach the development levels of North America.

Liévano Aguirre refers to the First Treasury Secretary of the United States, one of the most important economists of his time and the architect of the North American development after the independence.

In his youth, Hamilton (1757-1804) had studied the writings of the famous French economist Jean Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683),

Finance Minister to Louis XIV, who reorganized French's finance and admirably multiplied the national manufacture.

Although Hamilton's political writings are well known in North America (particularly the 85 essays which make up *The Federalist*, a work developed jointly with John Jay and James Madison), his work and economic writings are not known, neither taught in economy faculties.

I read Hamilton's works and analyzed his approach when I was investigating how economies actually function, and even translated some of his texts into Spanish, which were published in the magazine *Fuerza Productiva*<sup>2</sup>. What follows is a brief summary of his thoughts.

At the end of the eighteenth century, coinciding with the independence of the United States (1776), there was an important debate between two opposed conceptions of capitalism: on one side the British school and, on the other, the American school. Let's keep in mind that even though nowadays the two countries share a common liberal model, two hundred years ago they waged a war precisely to defend political and economic approaches that were quite the contrary.

The British side had its main exponent in Adam Smith (1723-1790) with his book *The Wealth of Nations*, while Hamilton headed the American side. According to Smith, wealth comes from the accumulation of material goods, while for Hamilton, the main source of wealth is man himself, because of his capacity to transform raw material into useful objects using his main resource: creativity.

Let's imagine the United States not as it is now, the first world power, but as it was two hundred years ago, a backward colony, qui-

te weakened after coming out of a war. Hamilton proposed a development and recuperation program based on the construction of infrastructure and the establishment of an industrial manufacturing plant to serve as complement and impulse to the traditional agrarian activity.

Hamilton carried out his plan based on three points: first, the promotion and protection of national industry; second, the issue of internal credit to finance production; and, third and most important, the encouragement of science and technology.

Hamilton's model served to change an agrarian country, a producer of raw material, into an industrialized country, in a relatively short lapse of time. His plans were explained to the Congress through three reports: one about credit (January, 1790); another about banking (December 1790); and finally one about manufacture (December 1791).

Hamilton was the first of several economists –among whom we also find Friederich List (1789) and Henry Carey (1793-1879)– creators of the North American industrial capitalism or productive system as opposed to British liberal capitalism.

The productive school had an overwhelming success and helped inspire many economists and statesmen from all over the world. Wherever its plans were applied nations prospered, as shown in the cases of Germany through the economist Friederich List, and Japan during the Meiji Restoration.

#### FRIEDERICH LIST

The second representative of the productive school is the Ger-

man Friederich List, who arrived in New York in 1825, as a guest of his friend, the famous Marquis de Lafayette.

Once in the United States List was able to confirm how the ex British colony had turned into a rich emporium within a few decades, which was evident in the construction of roads, channels and railroads, and in accelerated growth of industry and the welfare of citizens.

During his visit to North America, which lasted for nine years, List eagerly studied the advances of chemistry, mechanics, mining, agriculture and other disciplines; and he was able to confirm how scientific and technological advance notably increased the nation's productivity.

In the mean time, List edited a newspaper in Pennsylvania and built the railroad section that connects the city of Buffalo with Niagara Falls. Back in his country, he was the main promoter of the German Customs Union (Zollverein), and the German railroad (Bundesbahn).

List decided to register for posterity the progress he had seen through a book called *National System of Political Economy*. The book is an interesting controversy between the approach of British liberal capitalism and the exciting concept of development he had found in the United States.

Friederich List harshly criticized liberal capitalism and warned that with that model England pretended to obtain its own economic and political prevalence in detriment of the other nations. According to him, such model would be "a repetition of something which happened before, in the times of the Romans... The result would be the same: barbarism"<sup>3</sup>.

List assures that “the prosperity of a nation is not measured by its wealth, that is, the accumulated exchangeable values, but rather its capacity to develop productive energies”<sup>4</sup>. And “productive energies” are, according to List’s point of view, “the accumulation of all discoveries, inventions, improvements and efforts of past generations”, which altogether make up to “the spiritual capital of living humanity”<sup>5</sup>. In other words, wealth comes from human creativity.

List explained,

The sources of wealth are completely different from wealth itself”. An individual can possess wealth, that is, exchangeable valuables, and not possess the necessary energy to create useful objects; consequently he consumes them and impoverishes... The aptitude to create wealth is, therefore, much more important than wealth itself<sup>6</sup>.

Adam Smith disregarded the nature of these forces so much that not once he assigned productivity to intellectual work. His investigations are limited to human activity, capable of producing material valuables<sup>7</sup>.

These concepts fit beautifully with the Christian commandment of preserving human life and respecting man’s dignity, not only because those are moral imperatives but also as an economic necessity, because if wealth comes from human creativity, exploiting man to obtain supposed economic benefits becomes absurd; it is much more productive and profitable to provide human beings with the best conditions, including a good education, so that they may freely develop their creative capacities.

#### HENRY CAREY

In a letter dated in London, March 5th 1852, Karl Marx expressed his great concern with the growing influence of Henry Carey, whom

he described as “the only American economist of relevance”<sup>8</sup>, in spite of this hardly anybody knows of him. For example, his most important books *Principles of Political Economy* (1837) and *The Harmony of Interests* (1851) have never been translated into Spanish.

Henry Carey was born in Philadelphia in 1793, when George Washington was still the President of the United States. As a child, he was an avid reader and soon went successfully into business, not only in the family editorial, but also investing in the most important industries in Philadelphia, which allowed him to retire from commercial activity in 1835, at forty two, in order to fully dedicate himself to what he considered his true calling: writing and promoting a complete doctrine of political economy.

For many years he was one of the editors of *The New York Herald Tribune*, the most influential newspaper of the United States at the time, on political matters. He was member of several important societies, such as the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

In his work *The Harmony of Interests*, Carey strongly criticized the school of Adam Smith, arguing that his only interest was to make England “the factory of the world”, preventing other nations from developing their own factories. In this way, he said, England kept the world population and its own people in backwardness and misery.

The British colonial system secures low salaries, which necessarily is followed by incapacity to dedicate time to intellectual improvement. On the other hand, the protection system contemplates high salaries, which in turn allows the worker to enhance his mind and educate his children. The British child who travels to this country (the United States) turns into an educated and responsible person. If he stays in his country, he remains in brutal ignorance<sup>9</sup> said Carey.

The protection system to which Carey made reference was the North American strategy of protecting its national industry from indiscriminate importation of foreign goods until it could reach sufficient degree of development to compete with them.

Carey accused the British system of causing communism: “The policy of England tends to produce communism among nations” - he said- “the British system tends to make the rich richer and the poor poorer”<sup>10</sup>.

To face the exploitation of man in the frantic search of money and the dictatorship of Marxist proletariat, Carey proposed a “harmony” between patrons and workers in which, through the growing use of technology, both sectors would benefit, the first obtaining bigger profits and the second better life conditions.

In addition to writing, Carey personally directed the development of North American economy together with a group of Philadelphia industrialists. His main goal was to turn the United States into a world power and export its productive revolution to the whole world, a feat they accomplished brilliantly.

As Hamilton and List, Carey assured –as he wrote in his *The Unity of the Law*– that wealth does not come from the possession of material goods but from “man’s capacity of placing the forces of nature under his command”<sup>11</sup> through science and technology.

To compete successfully with foreign products, he and his co-workers invested plenty of resources in investigation, creating the Franklin Institute for Scientific and Technological Research, linked to the University of Pennsylvania. Among the scientists of the group there was the famous Thomas Alba Edison. Apart from this,

they established relations with scientists from other countries, such as the Russian Dimitri Mendeleev, who traveled to Pennsylvania in 1876.

In 1869, during the Meiji Restoration, the renovating current of Prince Tomomi Iwakura carried out a modern economic program with the help of Edward Peshine Smith, one of Henry Carey's disciples, who was officially named consultant to the Meiji Emperor in 1871. After making an inventory of the Japanese production potential, the government laid out an industrialization and transport program using Carey's economic strategy.

Nowadays, the liberal line of thought has overtaken the whole world, even in the United States, and there is practically nothing left of the productive school. This is due to a change of cultural and moral paradigms. The traditional values based on family, work and fruitful sacrifice have changed for eagerness of money and pleasure.

For this reason, the productive capacity of the United States, measured in tangible goods, has diminished considerably. The great North American commercial centers no longer exhibit so many "made in USA" products, but rather made in Hong Kong and other nations. To a large extent, the United States maintains its hegemony thanks to a gigantic and dangerous monetary and financial management, as evidenced in Wall Street.

The United States has forgotten that its fight against England was based on the defense and promotion of its own development as a previous requirement to compete with British goods. Ironically, now pretends to make our undeveloped nations compete with American goods. Just as industrialized countries did at their moment, Latin America must first build an industrial platform of its own.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Liévano, A. I. (1983). *Bolívar*. Madrid. Ediciones Cultura Hispánica.

<sup>2</sup> Revista Fuerza Productiva (Productive Force Magazine), [www.fuerzasolidaria.org](http://www.fuerzasolidaria.org)

<sup>3</sup> List, F. (1841/1979) *Sistema Nacional de Economía Política*. (The National System of Political Economy). Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 158.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 155.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 150.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 153.

<sup>8</sup> Carta de Carlos Marx a Weydemeyer fechada en Londres el 5 de marzo de 1852. Citada por Bruckberger, R. L. (1958/1964). (Letter from Karl Marx to Weydemeyer, dated in London, March 5, 1852, cited by Bruckberger, R. L). *La República Moderna*. (The Modern Republic). Editorial Pleamar, p. 106. Buenos Aires.

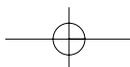
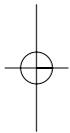
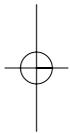
<sup>9</sup> Carey, H. (S/F). *La Armonía de Intereses*. (The Harmony of Interests).

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<sup>11</sup> Carey, H. (S/F). *La Unidad de la Ley*. (The Unity of Law).

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## 8. HOW TO MAKE A SUCCESSFUL ECONOMIC PROGRAM?



After reading the texts by Hamilton, List, and Carey, I considered that their approach had to be publicized and promoted in Latin America, since they could contribute to solving the problems of poverty and underdevelopment in the region.

In 1988, shortly after the elections that carried Carlos Andres Perez to the Presidency, I wrote a brochure entitled *How to Make Venezuela an Industrial Power*<sup>1</sup>, which was included in the El Nacional newspaper. I was afraid the economic measures of Perez would not solve my country's problems and thought necessary to present an alternative program based on the productive system. As fore-

seen, the Perez model collapsed after the revolts of February 27th, 1989.

Ten years later, in 1998, additional to the intense struggle carried out to keep Chavez from reaching power; I published a full and updated version of the same brochure, which was included in five newspapers, two of which had national coverage.

Starting 1999, I published 11 numbers of the bimonthly magazine *Fuerza Productiva*<sup>2</sup>, with the idea promoting in Venezuela the concepts developed by the productive school. In the opening number I wrote an article entitled How to make a successful economic program?<sup>3</sup> Which I reproduce –with some corrections– in the following pages; it illustrates the practical application of industrial capitalism.

The first step to designing an economic plan is to make an inventory of the nation's material assets: including raw material reserves, mineral as well as plants in all their categories; locating fertile lands for planting, adequate land for grassing and waters suitable for fishing and water species breeding; as well as assessing the nation's hydraulic potentials and so on. This is what is called the physical potential of the nation.

The second is making inventory of the existent labor force, specifying training level: workers, teachers, professionals, businessmen, scientists etc. and, assessing them by work area: mining, agriculture, cattle farming, industry, etc. in the various specialties. This is what is called the human potential.

The third is taking a survey of the infrastructure facilities, such as highways, energy, ports and airports as well as industrial plants, agri-

cultural and industrial machinery, real estate related to industrial and agricultural activities; the educational plant which includes schools, high schools, universities, technical institutes and research centers: housing units and constructions for basic services such as hospitals, etc.

The physical potential, human potential, infrastructure and installed plant make up the production potential of the nation, and its exact characterization allows us to determine what are the capabilities -and limitations- of a nation to implement a particular economic plan. In other words, they define the physical feasibility of the plan.

The fourth step would be to determine which kinds of projects would generate the largest numbers of employment and productivity; in general they tend to be infrastructure projects. Reactivating economy fast and efficiently requires, among other initiatives, repairing and widening highways, and irrigation channels; building ports and airports; increasing capacity of electric energy generation; expanding railroad works; construction of new cities; maintenance and improvement of the industrial plant; making available millions of new hectares to planting and cattle farming, and so on. The other sector that increases productivity is capital goods industry, that is, goods to produce other goods or contribute directly to their production, for example: motors, turbines, machines-tools (drills, cutters, benders, etc.).

The fifth step is defining the cost of these projects and also the volume of credit necessary to finance their development, classifying them by stages and components. Next together with the Mi-

nistry of Finance and the Central Bank, the establishment of a mechanism to issue financial instruments that would materialize the required volume of credit. This calculation must then be reflected in the cash flow.

And last, the sixth step, consist on calculating the amount of taxes that will be collected by the treasury as a consequence of the proposed projects. This helps to determine their economic feasibility. Apart from direct payments, resulting from the development of the projects, there will be an indirect income generated by the private investment related to these works such as from contracting companies, service companies, materials and equipment sales companies and others.

The physical and economic feasibilities previously described make up the platform to start –in a short term– a successful industrialization and development program.

But, in addition, the following must be considered:

First, the state must firmly guarantee and defend private property because, even though human beings motivations are primarily transcendental, they also need to satisfy material needs, among them assuring their children's future and owning their own house. It seems ironical that Marxists may defend so eagerly the workers' salaries and at the same time attack private property because, as explained by Pope Leo XII, property is nothing but an expression of the worker's accumulated salary.

Second, it is not convenient the use foreign currency to import consumer goods that could be produced internally. It is better to destine these to the buying of technology capable of improving and

increasing national production. At the start, the goods produced will be more expensive and of less quality than those imported, but, in the long run, the level of industrialization will result in better prices and quality. As said by Frederick List, it is necessary to sacrifice “exchange values” for “productive energies”, that is the “price of industrial education of the country”<sup>4</sup>.

Third, to increase the production potential in an accelerated rate, the science and technology sector must grow to reach at least 3% of the population. This means an aggressive investment plan in the sector, so as to create and widen new investigation institutes, as well as scientific departments in the universities.

#### THE ROLE OF THE STATE

In the Marxist point of view, the state must plan the economy’s every detail in a centralized manner and intervene in absolutely all of its aspects. The liberal point of view says there should not be state intervention whatsoever, since there is a “spontaneous order” through which economy, left adrift, grows and develops by itself.

Industrial capitalism establishes that the state must plan the development of the nation in detail but mustn’t interfere with the execution. The State’s obligation is limited to creating the necessary conditions for a program to be carried out; the rest corresponds to the private sector in a spontaneous manner. These conditions include, among others, providing abundant internal credit and ensuring low interest rates.

Respect to the works of public infrastructure, the private sector in Latin America does not count with enough equipment and eco-

nomical resources to totally plan, coordinate and –specially– finance such a gigantic effort. Therefore the state must assume those functions, but the administration and construction must be carried out by the private enterprise.

#### PRODUCTIVE SYSTEM AND POPULATION

For the productive school, the exhaustion of natural resources is a totally relative subject, because technological and scientific advance, as well as the discovery of new energy sources, increase the influence of man over nature and permit the sustained increase of population density.

This was foreseen by Frederick List two hundred years ago when he wrote

According to the calculations of the savage, the hunter and the fisherman, the world could not sustain more than a million inhabitants; according to the shepherd, the whole world could not sustain ten million; and, according to the simple farmer, less than one hundred million, but, only in Europe there are more than two hundred million inhabitants<sup>5</sup>.

One of the consequences of implementing a successful industrialization and development program is the growth of population, together with a sustained improvement of quality of life. The most industrialized regions on the planet –for example, Europe and Japan– hold the largest population density. Conversely, the poorest regions, as Africa, have a reduced number of inhabitants per square kilometer.

On the other hand, Marxism and liberalism consider that natural resources are perishable and, because of this, every human being is a consumer who will reduce the limited resources of the planet.

As a consequence of this line of thought, both currents raise the need to control population growth.

Thus, Marxism and liberalism coincide with the old Thomas Malthus thesis expressed in his *Essay on the Principle of Population*. According to Malthus (1766-1834), human population grows in a geometric pattern, while the volume of food increases in an arithmetical pattern. Therefore, there is an increasing deficit between population and food resources.

The liberal British philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), who was very influential in the beginnings of the last century, vindicated Malthus' theory, by proposing the implementation of a "universal instruction for birth control with punishment for those who may have many children"<sup>6</sup>. This plan is no different to the population control policy of communist China.

Russell joined Julian Huxley's proposal (1887-1975) published in *The Times* on March 13th, 1951: stating that "It is mandatory that we develop a rational population policy for the whole world and that we work with methods to put it into practice...I consider the first step in this direction should be taken by the United Nations."<sup>7</sup>

The United Nations adopted the proposal and launched it officially in August 1974, when they held the first population conference in Bucharest. Twenty years later, in the International Conference on Population and Development<sup>8</sup> held in Cairo, the UN openly proposed an aggressive program for population control.

The United States also adopted population reduction as a State policy. On December 10th, 1974, the National Security Council issued a document entitled *National Security Study Memorandum 200*:

*Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests* 9.

Up to the 80's, the United States Agency of International Development (USAID)<sup>10</sup> alone, had invested more than three billion dollars in population control programs in different parts of the world. Among its methods, it suggested to “freeze” the presumably overpopulated nations’ economy, in order to force a reduction in population. This coincided with the recessive policies of organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund.

In 1995, Pope John Paul II made a serious denunciation about this in his *Evangelium Vitae* document (on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life):

The Pharaoh of old, haunted by the presence and increase of the children of Israel, submitted them to every kind of oppression and ordered that every male child born of the Hebrew women was to be killed. Today not a few of the powerful of the earth act in the same way. They too are haunted by the current demographic growth, and fear that the most prolific and poorest peoples represent a threat for the well being and peace of their own countries. Consequently, rather than wishing to face and solve these serious problems with respect for the dignity of individuals and families and for every person’s inviolable right to life, they prefer to promote and impose by whatever means a massive programme of birth control. Even the economic help which they would be ready to give is unjustly made conditional on the acceptance of an anti-birth policy<sup>11</sup>.

Population growth is not the cause of poverty as many may think, it is the result of wrong economic policies and lack of education. The real challenge to humanity then, is adopting policies that will ensure the development of nations and promote scientific advance, through the education of the population and the stimulation of man’s creativity.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Peña A. (1988). *Cómo hacer de Venezuela una potencia industrial*. (How to make of Venezuela an industrialized power?). Caracas.

<sup>2</sup> Revista Fuerza Productiva (Productive Force Magazine). [www.fuerzasolidaria.org](http://www.fuerzasolidaria.org)

<sup>3</sup> Peña A. (1999). *¿Cómo hacer un programa económico exitoso?*. (How to make a successful economic program?). Revista Fuerza Productiva, N° 1, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> List. F. (1841/1979) *Sistema Nacional de Economía Política*. (The National System of Political Economy). Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 146.

<sup>6</sup> Russell, B. (1951). *Nuevas Esperanzas para un mundo cambiante* (New Hopes for a changing world). Cap. 5. C.P. Peña A. (2000). "La cruda verdad sobre la globalización". Revista Fuerza Productiva. N° 6, p 14.

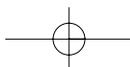
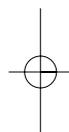
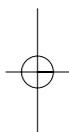
<sup>7</sup> Huxley, J. (1951, marzo, 13). *The Times*. C.P. Russell, B. (1951) *Nuevas Esperanzas para un mundo cambiante*. Cap. 5. C.P. Peña A. (2000). "La cruda verdad sobre la globalización". Revista Fuerza Productiva. N° 6, p 14.

<sup>8</sup> Página de la Conferencia Internacional sobre Población y Desarrollo  
<http://www.un.org/spanish/conferences/accion2.htm>

<sup>9</sup> National Security Council (1974). *National Security Study Memorandum 200*. Washington D.C. <http://www.population-security.org/11-CH3.html>

<sup>10</sup> United States Agency for International Development. <http://www.usaid.gov>

<sup>11</sup> Pope John Paul II, "Evangelium Vitae", Encyclical Letter. Art. 16. (March 25, 1995).  
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## 9. HOW TO PROMOTE CREATIVITY?



The most exciting and moving aspect of productive or industrial capitalism is the notion regarding the human being, as the true and unique source of wealth. It is a very elevated conception of man, which is completely different to the materialistic nature of liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism.

According to the productive school, the intellectual labor of human being, measured in scientific and technological advances, produces changes in how man relates to nature in order to obtain and transform the resources he needs.

The control of new sources of energy or the development of ne-

wer and more efficient methods of production greatly increase human labor. These are the true wealth of a nation, not gold, or silver, or other mineral resources.

Henry Carey explained it this way:

Wealth is the power of man to command the services of the powerful forces of nature. If the great forces of nature are increasingly submitted to human control, the larger the production capacity will be, and also the tendency to accumulate wealth, resulting in physical, mental, moral and political improvement of the citizens<sup>1</sup>.

#### SCIENCE AS A STATE POLICY

Creativity is not a special gift granted to some genius; on the contrary, it is an essential characteristic of all human beings. Just as birds were born to fly and fishes to swim, man was given intelligence to create. He simply needs certain conditions, so that he may develop his capacities, among others, food, housing, education, liberty, family stability and a stable emotional life, which comes from the affection of his loved ones.

Creativity is not a product of chance or strange inspiration; it is the result of decades of toil, sacrifice and discipline. To make a valid contribution to the arts or to science, it is first necessary to study thoroughly the subject that the person wants to dominate, to comprehend in detail the accomplishments of predecessors in that particular area, something which takes years of dedication. Only when a thorough understanding of the subject has been achieved, the investigation itself begins until –finally– the initial results are produced, which are enriched during the following years of further investigation.

Just as some countries decide to encourage sports, subsidizing sportsmen and granting incentives, and other nations decide to promote tourism offering good services to visitors, so can a nation promote technological and scientific development and even make of human creativity a conscious, voluntary and generalized phenomenon. To achieve this, the following considerations must be contemplated:

First, state's general educational planning must be closely related to the goals that the science and technology sectors want to achieve.

Second, the scientific researcher must be provided with sufficient funds to cover his basic needs for full time dedication to his activity. In general, the salary received by a researcher in any Latin American county, does not meet these requirements.

Third, the creative capacity of the human being is closely linked to the cultural activity he develops. The prevailing culture of materialism and hedonism is not compatible with the development of creative capacities, because the quest for immediate satisfaction and easy money –as well as the turmoil this entail– does not allow the person to concentrate the long hours of work required for investigation. This is why it is mandatory to sponsor a culture that not only promotes excellence in education but also spiritual and moral principles, in accordance to the quiet and reflexive attitude necessary for reading and studying; a culture in agreement with dedication and service vocation required for scientific investigation.

Fourth, society must stimulate investigation by recognizing scientists' worth. It is very revealing –not to discredit the seventh

art or sports- that movie stars and sportsmen are so admired while educators and scientific investigators are relegated to second place. A scientist is a deeply human individual who sacrifices most of his time to benefit humanity with his findings. Poorly paid and often unrecognized, the scientist is stimulated by a beautiful eagerness to search for truth and gain knowledge of the universe. On his path, he gradually discovers every detail of the marvels of God's work, becoming a profoundly spiritual being, something which is often illustrated in the biographies of great scientists.

#### TECHNOLOGY DOES NOT DISPLACE LABOR

In spite of common belief, technology does not displace hand labor because the construction of machines opens more employment posts than it closes.

A tractor, for example, substitutes the labor of one hundred farm workers who use pick, shovel and rake; but, the construction and assembly of the tractor opens work posts in the motor and parts manufacturing area, control instrument and petrochemical industries (fuel, oils, hoses, belts, etc).

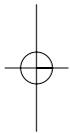
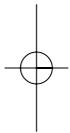
This phenomenon is not well understood in Latin America because, in general, importing prevails. At most, machines are assembled locally. So the acquisition of imported machinery displaces national labor while opens posts abroad. But, if Latin America should decide to become industrialized, and manufacture its own machines, the demand for internal hand labor would be enormous.

In its first stage, investment should be made in each nation's most advantageous area. In case of Venezuela, it should be in the pe-

trochemical sector. But within medium term thereafter, investments could be expanded to other areas.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Carey, H. (S/F). *La Unidad de la Ley*. (The Unity of Law). Traducido y citado por Peña, A. (1999) en "El Milagro Económico de Henry Carey". Revista Fuerza Productiva. N° 3, p. 22.



## 10. THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS



Latin American countries have not come out from their underdevelopment, nor made any major contribution to science and arts due to –among other reasons– a distortion of their history which has lead them, unnecessarily, to underestimate themselves.

The Spanish historian Julián Juderías (1877-1918), author of the book *The Black Legend*, explained some aspects of this phenomenon, documenting the existence of a myth according to which Spain is considered “ignorant, fanatical, and incapable of becoming cultured, always ready for violent repression, enemy of progress and innovation”<sup>1</sup>. The Latin American consequence of this legend is that our

people –as Spanish descendants– suffer the same serious limitations, such as incapacity to generate and incorporate scientific and technological advances.

These lies and exaggerations against Spain, fully refuted by numerous historical documents, became an unquestioned truth, to the extent that most Latin American people believe and repeat those lies, not realizing the serious damage inflicted upon themselves, and on their self esteem.

The creative capacity of a nation is closely related to its historical identity; the population's self opinion and self-esteem. If people feel satisfied and proud of their history, they feel more capable of making valuable contributions to humanity.

According to Juderías, the enemies of Spain began to spread the black legend in the middle of the sixteenth century due to the protestant Reform. Given the existing identification between Spain and the Catholic Church, discrediting one would affect the other.

The promoters of the black legend used, among others, the texts of William of Orange (1533-1584), exiled by Philip II for treason, Antonio Pérez (1540-1611) ex Secretary of State to Philip II who fled to France after committing criminal deeds, and Fray Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566) who wanted to defend the natives by exaggerating the Spanish behavior against them.

In his work *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, (*Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*), de las Casas said the natives were “humble sheep” and the Spaniards “wolves, tigers, or lions that had been starved for many days. And have behaved in no other way during the past forty years, down to the present time, for

they are still acting like ravening beasts, killing, terrorizing, afflicting, torturing, and destroying the native peoples, doing all this with the strangest and most varied new methods of cruelty, never seen or heard of before”, because they “have an ultimate aim, which is to acquire gold, and to swell themselves with riches”<sup>2</sup>.

Between the end of the sixteenth century and the middle of the eighteenth century, no less than thirty five editions of this *Brevísima* were published in foreign languages: fourteen in Dutch, six in English, six in French, three in Italian, two in German, and even two in Latin.

#### HISTORICAL REFUTATION

To refute some of the most common allegations of the black legend, it is enough to point out three simple arguments:

First. The express orders given directly by Queen Isabel the Catholic and other kings to the Spanish conquerors was to respect the life and integrity of the natives, considering them human beings, equal to the Spaniards. There are numerous historical documents that confirm this fact. The excesses and abuses committed, were not State policy but rather individual crimes.

Second. If the Spaniards had murdered all the natives, they would have simply disappeared and would not exist to this day, not in their purest expression as they prevail in Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru, nor in their mixed race version (mestizo) present in the blood of almost all Latin Americans. As a matter of fact, the mixing of races is one of the elements that speaks in favor of Spain. The British, who did exterminate the North American natives, did not practice it.

It is very revealing that the Tlaxalteca Indians actively collaborated with Hernán Cortés to defeat the Aztecs, because the latter enslaved them and used them for human sacrifices. It is not a secret that these sacrifices required thousands of victims, and that in many native cultures, men ate each other.

Third. If the Spaniard had come only to loot and kill the natives, they wouldn't have constructed so many roads, bridges, channels, ports and beautiful cities with their squares, cathedrals, museums, hospitals, and what is most significant, universities.

In 1538 was founded the first in Latin America, the University of Santo Domingo. In 1551 and 1553, Charles V founded the University of Lima and the University of Mexico, respectively, both granted with all the privileges enjoyed by the University of Salamanca (Spain). In 1598 was founded the San Antonio Abad University in Cuzco, as well as the schools of San Felipe and San Martin in Lima, and others in Arequipa, Trujillo, and Guamanga, and so on.

In the most isolated colonies, universities took longer to be created. For instance, the University of Caracas, presently the Universidad Central de Venezuela, was founded in 1721.

On the other hand, there were no universities in the British colonies of North America. The students of this region had to travel south, first to learn Spanish so they could enroll in a university career.

About Spanish accomplishments in America, Alexander Humboldt said that

It is surprising to read in the Mexico Gazette that four hundred leagues from the capital, in Durango, for example, they make pianos and clavichords ... it is to be noted that among the first sugar mills constructed by the Spaniards in the be-

ginning of the sixteenth century, some were operated by hydraulic wheels and horses<sup>3</sup>.

And, like this one we could come up with many other authorized testimonies that show Spain's extraordinary undertakings in America.

#### MARXISTS AND LIBERALS COINCIDE

Marxists as well as Liberals have fully adopted the arguments of the black legend.

In its III Encounter, the Sao Paolo Forum proposed to

Participate and actively promote alternative programs to the official celebration of the V Centenary (of the discovery of America). We make a calling to challenge the official celebration date, and in its place praise native, black and popular resistance as part of a great liberating effort<sup>4</sup>.

In 2002, Hugo Chavez signed a decree in which Venezuela repudiates the "Columbus Day" and officially adopts the 12th of October as "Day of Native Resistance"<sup>5</sup>.

Likewise, the World Social Forum accuses Spain of

(...) killing and exterminating our natives, leaving us the loss of our cultural heritage, while imposing in exchange a culture of sadism ... yet it is most outrageous that even to this day, this genocide committed against our Indians, is celebrated on Columbus Day, which, in our opinion, was actually when genocide started in Latin America<sup>6</sup>.

On the other hand, liberalism considers that the Catholic religion is contrary to development; consequently, for America to prosper it must adopt an economic model in accordance with Protestantism. This proposal is based on a book written by the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920), *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, where Protestantism is attributed a supposed economic superiority.

In 1985, Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, denounced that David Rockefeller –based on Weber’s theories– wanted to

(...) replace there (in Latin America) the Catholics for other Christians, an enterprise that, as we know, is well on its way... The notion that only Protestantism can produce a free economy, while Catholicism... favors authoritarian systems, is very widespread”, said Ratzinger <sup>7</sup>.

The black legend suits the Marxists perfectly, since it helps promote class struggle and race struggle –white conquerors against oppressed Indians– and justify social hate, now granting it an ancestral character. To liberals, the black legend serves to discredit the Catholic outlook and to reassert their materialistic conception.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Juderías, J. (1974). *La Leyenda Negra*. (The Black Legend) Editora Nacional, Madrid, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> De las Casas, B. (1552). *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*. (Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies). Disponible en <http://www.ciudadseva.com/textos/otros/brevisi.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Humboldt, A. (1811) *El Ensayo Político de la Nueva España*. (The Political Essay of New Spain) Citado por Peña A. (1999) “¿Es apta la cultura latinoamericana para el desarrollo científico y económico?”. Revista Fuerza Productiva. N° 2. p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Foro de Sao Paulo. (Julio, 1992). “Declaración Final del III Encuentro”. (Final Declaration of the III Meeting) Managua.

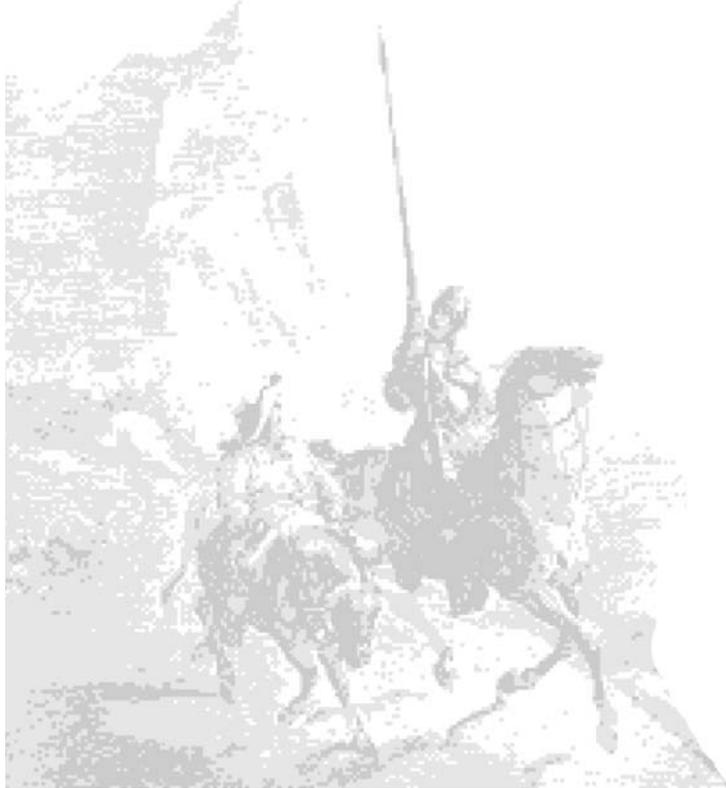
Disponible en [www.forosaopaulo.org](http://www.forosaopaulo.org). [2006, marzo, 29].

<sup>5</sup> Decreto 2.028. *Gaceta Oficial No. 5605 extraordinario*. Octubre 10. 2002. Disponible en <http://comunidad.vlex.com/pantín/d2028ch.html>

<sup>6</sup> Foro Social Mundial. Disponible en [www.forosocialmundial.org.ve](http://www.forosocialmundial.org.ve) [2006, marzo, 1]

<sup>7</sup> Ratzinger, J. (1985, noviembre). *Economía de Mercado y Ética*. (Market Economy and Ethics) Ponencia presentada en la conferencia Iglesia y Economía: responsabilidad para el futuro de la economía mundial. Universidad Pontificia Urbaniana. Disponible en <http://www.ucalp.edu.ar/ratzinger.html>. [29, marzo. 2006].

## 11. RECOVERING OUR HISTORICAL IDENTITY



In addition to the black legend, there is another historical phenomenon that has contributed to underdevelopment and lack of self-esteem of our countries, it is has to do with the rupture with traditional Hispanic culture and values.

The independence of our countries was historically inevitable, not only because Latin American nations had reached maturity to govern themselves, but also because in 1810 Spain was a decadent nation and, furthermore, invaded by France. But the Latin American Founding Fathers committed the mistake of breaking not only political ties with Spain, but also rejected Hispanic values, philosophy and heritage.

The Venezuelan writer Angel Bernardo Viso, in his book *Venezuela: Identity and Rupture* brilliantly studied this phenomenon. Even though the book refers to Venezuelan history, his approach applies to the whole continent.

According to Viso, Venezuelans started out “with the false premise that our history began when we separated from Spain”<sup>1</sup>, therefore, he says, “independence is presented to us as the very foundation of the nation; the heroes of our independence being precisely our fathers”<sup>2</sup>.

As a result of that premise “the identity between the Spanish component and the American component of the individual was broken”<sup>3</sup>. Afterwards, “an exaggerated and presumptuous history of our country was fabricated” to substitute the real one (connected with Spain). Such invention “darkened not only the history of Spain but also universal history”<sup>4</sup>. Our Founding Fathers condemned “the Spaniards with such passion, that in time it only worked against its own descendents”<sup>5</sup>, because, as a consequence, we adopted “an identity that went beyond the denial of Spain, to the denial of the Occidental civilization”<sup>6</sup>.

“The study of our national literature“, he explains, “totally conceals the great works of universal literature, to such an extent that the student receives the impression that any of our known writers had as much talent as Cervantes or Shakespeare”<sup>7</sup>.

At the time of the Independence, Spain was politically and morally weakened by the influence of the Enlightenment. In the Spanish colonies these ideas were fashionable and popular. For this reason, when the ties with Spain were broken, the universal truths contained in the Hispanic tradition were, to a great extent, substi-

tuted by the axioms of the Enlightenment. Those axioms, as I will explain, do not contain absolute truths; on the contrary, they bear a relative character. This explains why, once independence was achieved, Latin American countries did not rely on a solid and permanent code of values, but remained at the mercy of the policies imposed by the ruler in charge.

“Anarchy” -says Viso- “was the word used to describe the chaos created when the friendly ties that were held with Spain, were cut off”<sup>8</sup>. Our Founding Fathers erroneously believed that “the disarray following the Independence was due to clumsy selfishness and evil ambitions”<sup>9</sup>, as stated by Venezuelan president José Antonio Páez in his *Autobiography*.

Viso considers that “the reason for our repeated failure cannot any more be found in purely contingent reasons, such as those related to the character of our governors ... it must be found in the permanent ones, that is, in the code of values” that our nations are subjected to<sup>10</sup>.

Viso concludes his book proposing that we recover our national identity, rebuilding the broken bridges with the Spanish World, but making clear that we “must connect to the historical Spain, not the present one”, because nowadays Spain is the result –just like us– of “the decadence and dismembering of an empire”. Only if we rescue our traditional code of values and principles, “shall we stop projecting ourselves as second class citizens”<sup>11</sup>.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF THE ERA OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Jean Jacques Rousseau was probably the philosopher who most

influenced our Founding Fathers. Simón Rodríguez's admiration for the French philosopher, for example, was so obvious, that the Liberator (Simón Bolívar) once called him the "American Rousseau". Even Bolívar himself constantly referred to this Enlightenment philosopher.

The Enlightenment is a philosophical current from the end of the 18th century that radically denies the existence of God and transcendence of man. The philosophers of the Enlightenment –Rousseau, Voltaire, Montesquieu, D'Alembert, and Diderot, among others– not only broke with the traditions based on divine right, such as the monarchy, but also with Christianity itself, to the point that Voltaire would sign his letters with the postscript "écrasez l'infame" (crush the infamous) referring to the Catholic Church.

According to them, there is no natural law engraved in man's soul, which may indicate the path to righteousness and warn him of evil; there are no immutable laws either, all are relative and spring from man's reflection, conditioned by circumstance and his surrounding environment.

Since there are no absolute truths, and natural law does not exist, there is not a human nature common to all men either. Therefore, social relations are ruled by a "social contract" based on the will of the majority.

Describing the harmful effects of the Enlightenment, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, declared in his book *The Salt of the Earth*: "Following the suppression of the truth, decisions are left solely to us, hence, to arbitrariness. If man does not recognize the truth, he degrades himself. If what comes about is solely the

result of a private or collective decision, man demeans himself”<sup>12</sup>, which is what has in fact happened.

#### THE ASSAULT OF POSTMODERNISM

After decades of expansion, the Enlightenment axioms were gradually accepted by society, and later originated a more radical and harmful philosophical version, known as postmodernism.

This tendency, characterized by exaggerated individualism and hedonism, has been massively transmitted since the end of last century through plastic arts, poetry, literature, music, movies and television, to the extent that it has turned into a general behavior pattern in the whole world.

It is expressed as a cult to personal liberation, that rejects all forms of restraint or limitation to private autonomy, be it justified or not. Or, to put it more plainly, it is the triumph of selfishness as a behavior paradigm.

Postmodernism does not accept authority whatsoever, divine or human, opening the way to new values, being the most important the pursuit of pleasure. It is, no doubt, the ultimate and radical manifestation of individualistic ideology.

As explained by Gilles Lipovetsky, author of the book *La Era del Vacío* (The Era of Emptiness): Nuclear anxiety, war threats, terrorism, subversion, unsolved economic problems, the climate of pessimism and pending catastrophes, magnified by movies and television through pictures of death and extreme violence, have resulted in a regression into the immediate present. Living the present, and only the present, not worrying about the past or the future. “We li-

ve for ourselves, unconcerned about our traditions or posterity: the sense of history has been forgotten, as well as other values and institutions”<sup>13</sup>.

One of the most significant social and cultural facts of postmodernism is living without limitations, fully choosing each one’s way of existence. Unfortunately, many choose the “right” to assume and even promote pathological behaviors, vindicating promiscuity, abortion, the use of illegal drugs, etc.

Ironically, although all individualistic “rights” are reaffirmed, the human specie as such is criticized and denigrated. Postmodernism rejects the traditional preponderance of man –established even in the Bible– over nature. Much more energy and resources are invested in defending animals in danger of extinction and the ecosystem than in saving millions of human beings who die in wombs of their mothers or starve in the poor neighborhoods. As a matter of fact, man and technology are blamed for the destruction of the “mother earth”, considered as a deity.

Another characteristic of postmodernism is a mistaken conception of Democracy. All opinions, either if they come from experts or not, are considered equal and have the same specific weight, because what counts is not the search for truth (since in postmodernism it does not exist), but the possibility of free expression.

Another characteristic of postmodernism is the presence of an absolute and blatant indifference, without feeling any sense of guilt. As explained by Lipovetsky, if Nietzsche proclaimed that “God is dead”, but in the midst of great existential anguish; post-modernist man reaffirms the same, but without caring at all. The

Theater of the Absurd of some decades ago and the emotional contradictions of existentialism have been substituted for an emotional disengagement.

Education has become enormously permissive, attending more to the wishes of the children and teenagers than to the rigorous requirements of integral formation. The prestige and authority of the teaching staff has been undermined to near disappearance, particularly in public schools. The discourse of the teacher has been trivialized. Since there are no truths, the teacher's lessons are considered only "points of view". Learning is no longer a motivation in itself.

Instead, there is great interest –obsession sometimes– for the body, sex, entertainment, vacations, and leisure time. Physical exercise is not only a health preserving practice or a mechanism to encourage discipline, but a way of keeping "beautiful", because postmodernism bestows external beauty a superlative value.

Sex is no more a means to procreate children and to express love to whom you are tied "till death do us part", but rather an instrument to obtain pleasure and self-satisfaction, seeking for the maximum variety and diversification, even though afterwards it may result in an enormous emptiness.

Work is no longer a tool for self-realization, personal improvement or to serve others, but the way to obtain the resources required for enjoyment and vacations, because living without ideals or without transcendent goals is possible and even desirable.

Postmodern individualism, rejection of authority, debauchery and indifference stimulate anarchy in society, which prevent citi-

zens from organizing themselves to face the most immediate and obvious threats. Postmodern man has placed himself as a priority, not the nation. He has no reasons to sacrifice himself or to fight for noble ideals, not even when it involves the survival of his own nation.

#### REAFFIRMING OUR GENUINE IDENTITY

Before we continue, let's make a brief summary of what has happened: Since the 16th century, Latin America has been bombarded with the black legend, something which gradually weakened its identity. At the start of the 19th century our countries became independent from Spain but, at the same time, committed the mistake of rejecting Hispanic values, particularly the philosophical outlook of Christianity (although maintaining Catholicism as the official religion).

The vacuum generated by this rupture was filled with the prevailing philosophical outlook of the Enlightenment; consequently, our countries abandoned a code of values based on absolute truths and embraced a new one, based on moral and cultural relativism. In addition, an economic model based on the British colonial system was adopted, instead of implementing a program such as Hamilton's.

This process rendered Latin America helpless to face the assault of Marxism and liberalism, thus generating a vicious circle that has kept us poor and underdeveloped. In addition, in the last few decades, our continent has been heavily contaminated by postmodernism.

Finally, since 1998, there has been a shift towards socialism; be it

authoritarian, as that of Chavez, or democratic, as that of Lula; but none of these capable of breaking the vicious circle.

To straighten this chain of calamities, we have to start from the beginning, recovering our true historical identity; which does not mean integrating ourselves again with Spain, a country that –just like ours– has been debasing itself, but recuperating the moral and philosophical values of the old Spain.

Thanks to the great legacy of Spanish world, our people are heir to the most profound and advanced concepts of Occidental Civilization. Any Latin American citizen, who sets his mind to it and receives proper education, can achieve the most advanced level of knowledge in any area or discipline.

The works of Plato, Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas, Da Vinci, Raphael, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Quevedo, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Copernicus, Kepler, Einstein, and all the great personages of humanity are at the immediate disposal of Latin American people, because their lives and contributions have been expounded and studied in depth in a common language: Spanish.

Together with the language, we have been gifted with an extraordinary cultural wealth, characteristic of a nation that was once the first world power, not only due to its political and military might, but also due to scientific, economic and cultural development.

Spanish heritage was much more than its political power –as explained by Juderías– “the labor of Spain was, more than anything, spiritual; its goal was not that of other people. Don Quixote did not leave his village seeking for gold, but in search for honor”<sup>14</sup>. In fact,

the greatest contribution of Spain to Latin America was bringing Christianity along with its philosophical outlook.

To restore the Hispanic code of values and project ourselves as first world citizens, it is necessary that the inhabitants of our nations be fully acquainted with our true history and traditions. Curricula must be changed to include the milestones of the Hispanic exploits; the foundation of Spain as a nation; the eight hundred years of the Reconquista (Re-conquest), from the defeat of the moors near Covadonga in the year 718 by Don Pelayo's army, to the seizure of Granada by the Catholic Kings in 1492; the discovery and evangelization of America; the history of Charles I of Spain, also emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and his son, Philip II; the war against the Turks and the battle of Lepanto in 1571; the Spanish Golden Age (Cervantes, Góngora, Quevedo, Lope de Vega, Calderón de la Barca, etc); the effects of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment philosophers in America, to mention some of the episodes all Latin Americans should know in detail.

In addition, the curriculum must include basic aspects of history and contributions of each of our countries, from Mexico to Argentina; as well as the historical milestones of Portugal and Brazil, members of the Ibero American community, for they belong to –or descend from– the Iberian Peninsula.

The prior objective of the curriculum must be connecting the students to their own millenary culture, elevating their self-esteem and allowing them to make valuable contributions to their own country and humanity. Second, getting them acquainted with the values and contributions of Christianity, and use them as antidote

against the materialistic philosophies that prevail since the end of the 19th century. The third objective must be providing the cultural and conceptual elements to reconstruct the broken links with the Spanish World, not to rebuild the old empire, already an outdated model, but to conform a Latin American Common Market capable of integrating our nations under a single development project, in order to launch a moral, scientific and cultural renaissance.

To ensure the physical integration of our countries, it is necessary to build certain infrastructure projects, such as those proposed in the following chapter.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Viso, A. (1983). *Venezuela: identidad y ruptura*. (Venezuela: identity and rupture) Alfadil Ediciones, Caracas, p. 71

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.53

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 33

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 65

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 58

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.48

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.p. 65 y 66

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 83

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 91

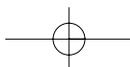
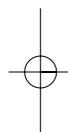
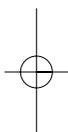
<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.142

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.145

<sup>12</sup> Ratzinger J. (2005). *La Sal de la Tierra*. (The Salt of the Earth). Ediciones Palabra, Madrid, p.73.

<sup>13</sup> Lipovetsky, *El posmodernismo y la parálisis de la sociedad* (Postmodernism and the paralysis of society). Citado en Fuerza Productiva N° 8, octubre-noviembre 2000

<sup>14</sup> Juderías, J. (1974). *La Leyenda Negra*. (The Black Legend). Editora Nacional, Madrid, p. 38.



## 12. LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION



Once recovered our historical identity and with an adequate economic program on its way, the only element needed to build a powerful continent is the physical integration of the region.

There is a general agreement in Latin American on the historical need of integration but, nevertheless, so far it has remained in only good intentions. Lets compare, for example, the commerce figures in Europe and Latin America.

The countries belonging to the European Economic Community exchange among themselves sixty percent of their external commercial product. Conversely, less than twenty percent of the total

of imports made by Latin America originates from the region. This is understandable, since there are more transportation facilities to countries outside the region than internally.

There cannot be Latin American integration without sufficient infrastructure; that is, without the physical means that will allow proper communication and transport inside the region. This is why all attempts to achieve integration have so far failed or, at most, focalized in the borders of each Latin American country.

To achieve integration, it is necessary to build railroads, roads, bridges, channels, ports, airports, shipyards, etc. It is also necessary to industrialize the whole continent, building heavy industry, electric power stations, urban infrastructure, etc.

Latin America, considered as a whole, constitutes a formidable market of around 500 million inhabitants, which justifies the installment of advanced-technology heavy industry, capable of producing goods that could easily pay back the investment, through distribution and sales in such huge market.

#### THE CONTINENTAL RAILROAD

Today's Latin American railroad network is smaller to that of the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, though more of it is needed because of the area involved.

Most of the Latin American railroad network was built before 1930 and was not designed to connect our countries, but to extract resources from internal locations to ports, that is, to feed an economy based on exports. Furthermore, the railroads networks were

constructed of different widths, which would make connection between each other impossible.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, there have been plans to construct a Pan-American railroad. One of the main projects includes the construction of a railroad from Mexico to Buenos Aires, going down from Central America alongside the Pan-American Highway, forking out when approaching the Andes to reach Chile on the first junction, and Brazil and Argentina on the second (bordering the Caribbean and Atlantic coasts). These plans must simply be updated and modernized.

In the heavier traffic zones, it is necessary to open high-speed double track railroads to transport cargo and passengers. This means close to 50.000 kilometers of railroads, not counting the internal railroads required to communicate cities inside each country. The project should be complemented with four lane highways to link our nations and to connect the inland (farming regions) to the national and regional markets.

#### MARITIME AND FLUVIAL INTEGRATION

South America takes little advantage of its rivers for transportation. Brazil and Argentina are the only countries that make some use of them. To achieve integration, it's necessary to connect the Orinoco, Amazon and La Plata rivers, thus creating one fully navigable route that would link all South American nations.

Since 1840 there are projects for the fluvial integration of the continent. In 1799, Alexander Humboldt went to the fountain-head of the Casiquiare River, where it divides and runs to the basin

of the Orinoco and the Amazon, and realized the importance of connecting the two basins and establishing a navigation network.

Sixty eight percent of the 10.000 km route between Ciudad Guayana (Venezuela) and Buenos Aires is already navigable for 6m draft ships. Another 28 percent require minor hydraulic works to make it navigable. The rest major obstacles could be cleared through great works accomplished with bilateral or multilateral efforts.

Furthermore, the ports already existing in the continent should be improved and enlarged in order to manage the increase of continental trade due to railroad and fluvial integration.

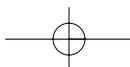
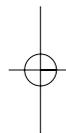
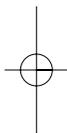
Both liberals and Marxists speak about integration; the first in terms of free trade, such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA, or ALCA in Spanish); the others, as Chavez, in terms of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA); but none of them propose physical integration through great works of transportation infrastructure, because, supposedly, the financial resources to carry them out do not exist.

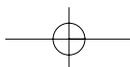
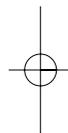
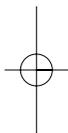
This materialistic outlook does not allow them to understand that the only requirement for building the proposed highways, railroads and hydraulic works is not money, but production potential. As explained en chapter 8, if there is sufficient raw material, skilled labor and technology, only credit is required.

Since several countries must undertake such works, a Latin American Development Bank should be created to provide credit and facilitate commercial interchange. This way, the foreign currencies requirements would be minimized.



The challenge is similar to that faced by Hamilton in his time: conquering an enormous, wild territory, populating and developing it. If North Americans were able to achieve this successfully, there is no reason to believe we cannot.





## CONCLUSION

It was Pope Paul VI who, for the first time, coined the term “Continent of Hope”, referring to Latin America, and John Paul II turned it into a motto when he repeated it so many times.

Latin America is full of natural resources: it contains the largest water and forest reserves in the world; it is rich in almost every existing mineral, including strategic ones, such as petroleum; and its fishing resources are immense. This extraordinary condition happens in a region where practically all the population speaks the same language, which is in itself an advantage. Nevertheless, when the Church speaks of “Hope”, it does not refer to the material aspect of our continent, but to the spiritual one.

Latin America holds the highest number in catholic population, close to 500 million people. This number doubles the European catholic population, it's six times larger than North American and corresponds to almost half of the world total. In addition, it IS the continent of optimism and joy.

In his book, *The Salt of the Earth*, Ratzinger says about Latin America: “it always surprises me that in the poorest neighborhoods... there are so many happy and smiling people. It is obvious that, in spite of their poverty, they still perceive the good and hold on to it, to lift their morale and obtain renewed strength”<sup>1</sup>.

This attitude is not accidental. Latin America has not been affected by materialistic philosophies as much as other regions have; and materialism -be it Marxist or liberal- destroys the most valuable

part of a human being: his spiritual and transcendent condition and, as a consequence, the possibility of reaching happiness.

When we speak of happiness, we are not referring to well being, wealth or power, parameters which are more related to pleasure; but to the state a human being achieves when he feels loved, useful to others, and pursuing a noble cause; that is, when he experiences the joy associated with love and transcendence.

The difference between transcendental happiness and egoistic pleasure is clearly seen when comparing the attitudes that different nations have towards life. In Latin America, despite the economic limitations, the birth of a child is, generally, reason for great joy. While in Europe and North America, there is a growing rejection to births, which is shown by the increase of abortions and the aging of the population. The motto seems to be: “every human being who is born is a burden and comes to take up my space”. This is a regression to the theories of Malthus.

Frederich List said about Malthus propositions:

Such theory tries to raise the most uninhibited selfishness to the category of law... It tries to transform men's hearts into stone. What can we ultimately expect from a nation where citizens keep in their chest stones instead of hearts? What else but the complete ruin of all sense of morality, of all productive energies, and consequently, of all wealth and all civilization?<sup>2</sup>.

Indeed, in many nations –particularly in the most civilized and developed ones– self-centeredness, hedonism and debauchery typical of postmodernism, have transformed men's hearts into stone, and it is only a matter of time for this phenomenon to generate all types of evils and destructive tendencies.

Latin America has the enormous responsibility of rescuing such

countries from their own self-destruction, spreading our joy among them and passing on the values and principles that still endure in our continent. But, in order to be in a condition to do this, it is necessary to correct our own deviations, as mentioned in the previous chapters, and launch, as soon as possible, an economic, moral and cultural renaissance.

There is not much time left, the growing conflicts that affect humanity and the existing atomic arsenal constitute a dangerous combination that could plunge us into a catastrophe.

That is why Latin America cannot afford to make a mistake again, jumping from the liberal model to the socialist model, which already has been proven ineffective.

Let there be no doubt: this is the Continent of Hope; but the first step to make this motto a reality is believing in it with all our minds, hearts and souls. Let's start now!

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ratzinger J. (2005). *La Sal de la Tierra*. (The Salt of the Earth). Ediciones Palabra, Madrid, p.40.

<sup>2</sup> List. F. (1841/1979) *Sistema Nacional de Economía Política*. (The National System of Political Economy) Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, p. 147.

