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# LATIN AMERICA AND THE VATICAN

*By*

AVRO MANHATTAN

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## LATIN AMERICA AND THE VATICAN

## LATIN AMERICA, THE CONTINENT OF THE FUTURE

THE total area of the twenty countries constituting Central and South America, now commonly labelled Latin America, is about 8,500,000 square miles. From the northern boundary of Mexico to the southern extremity of Chile is a distance of some 7,000 miles—almost as far as from London to Capetown. Some idea of the immensity of this sub-continent will be gained if it is borne in mind that Mexico is about one-third the size of the U.S.A., and that Brazil's territory is roughly equal in area to the whole of the United States and Alaska. This sub-continent has a population of only 130,000,000, or 15 per square mile. Brazil, with 45,000,000 people on its immense territory, has the largest population of these twenty countries, the other four most populous being Mexico with 23,000,000, Argentina with 13,000,000, Columbia with 9,000,000, and Peru with 8,000,000. The U.S.A., with an area of 3,022,387 square miles, has a population of 134,000,000, or 43 per square mile, while Europe, area 3,875,000 square miles, has a population of 465,000,000, a density of 120 per square mile. Thus Latin America, with an area greater than that of the U.S.A. and Europe together, has less than a quarter of their combined populations.

When one considers what a source of unrest overcrowding has been and still is in Europe and in certain parts of Asia, and what a powerful contribution it has made to the causes of two world wars, as well as to social, political, and economic upheavals, one cannot help thinking of this thinly inhabited sub-continent as a possible safety valve for the over-populated areas of the world, especially when it is remembered that the world's population is increasing at a rate of about 180,000,000 every ten years.

But, in addition to its great size and relatively small population, Latin America, with a variety of climates and geographical conditions, is habitable by people of all races, the greater part of the region not being inimical to

Europeans and other white peoples. It would seem, therefore, a region ideally suited to receive and absorb some of the millions living in overcrowded and impoverished countries. Furthermore, unlike its northern counterpart, it is peculiarly lacking in race prejudice. It has never erected serious barriers between the various races, whose intermingling, with rare exceptions, it has always encouraged.

### ITS ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

Besides the above-mentioned characteristics Latin America has also distinct economic advantages which point to its coming importance and suggest that it will have more and more influence on world affairs. Within its boundaries every kind of product required by the modern world can be found, from the most exotic types of fruit and plant to the most essential cereals, from iron and lead to gold and diamonds, as well as uranium and cognate metals necessary for the release of atomic energy. From an economic point of view Latin America is an enormously wealthy world, right outside the orbit of a scarcity-stricken Euro-Asiatic continent. Although its mineral riches are being gradually exploited, it still depends largely on agriculture. It produces enormous quantities of food of all kinds, including wheat, coffee, and beef, with which, were the world planned in a more rational way, it could feed hundreds of millions of people.

Thus food, relative emptiness, and great possibilities of development are all to be found in Latin America. It is not surprising, therefore, that it is regarded with increasing interest by the great economic and political Powers of the modern world, headed by its northern neighbour, the U.S.A.

### THE VATICAN'S INTEREST IN LATIN AMERICA

At this point the reader may well be inclined to ask what these facts and figures have to do with the Vatican. The answer should supply some food for thought. For not only has the Vatican a great deal to do with the various economic, political, social, and racial factors of Latin America, but from the very beginning it has exerted

—and continues to exert—a more powerful influence than that of any other Power or combination of Powers, including even the United States. The Catholic religion, in the hands of a world-wide and highly experienced institution like the Church, can make use of geographical, economic, political, and social factors to promote its aims, and it is in this light that the size, the wealth, and the other factors which Latin America might contribute to world prosperity should be seen and studied. In a world shaken by two world wars, threatened by a third, and disturbed by recurrent economic, political, and social crises, whoever can influence Latin America handles an increasingly powerful lever in the game of world politics.

It is not a mere matter of chance, therefore, that to-day the United States and the Vatican, although in many respects so different from one another, are trying to make friends with Latin America. Moreover, after mutual bargaining, they have come to a broad understanding by which that continent may become a mighty instrument for the use of both—for the former in the economic, political, and military field, and for the latter in the religious and social spheres.

How has the Vatican, a spiritual institution, obtained such domination over Latin America that to-day it is able to bargain with the United States on an equal footing, and even to impose its own terms? And how has it come about that Washington and the Vatican—two Powers with such diverse natures, functions, and aims—have now adopted a common policy towards Central and South America?

That is what we shall now try briefly to survey.

### THE SPANISH CONQUEST

The secret of the Catholic Church's hold on Latin America to-day is to be found in various factors, the combination of which has made the Church such an inescapable force throughout these countries.

First of all, religion and spiritual rule are still more powerful than the modern machinery of propaganda or the mechanized land, sea, or air forces of modern nations. Secondly, from the very beginning of modern history

Latin America has been so inextricably connected with the Catholic Church that it is literally impossible to read a single page of this history without coming across an example of the overwhelming power of Catholicism.

Catholicism, in fact, is more deeply implanted there than the influence of Spain; for, apart from language and other legacies, Spanish rule is but a thing of the past, whereas the dominion of the Catholic Church is as substantial as ever.

The exploration and colonization of the American continent were begun with the dual purpose of taking Christianity to the heathen and finding gold for the Spanish Crown—two objectives which, paradoxically, went hand in hand. They formed the basis on which State and Church became intimate partners in moulding the newly-discovered lands, and on which they co-operated for centuries.

The Church became the chief partner of Spain at the very beginning. When Columbus journeyed to the West Indies for the second time (1493), with an expedition of seventeen ships and 15,000 men, he had the permission of the Pope to take possession of the new lands for Spain. However, as disputes soon arose between Spain and Portugal (the English, Dutch, and French had not yet begun their colonial enterprise), the Pope solemnly divided this unknown world between Spain, which was given the right to possess everything west of a meridian running 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, and Portugal, which was given everything east of this line. In return both countries (fresh from the religious wars in Europe) saw that wherever their soldiers went they were accompanied by friars. The latter, besides administering baptism to the natives, set out to establish missionary centres, and thus implant Catholicism wherever the Spanish and Portuguese colonists founded citadels, villages, towns, or provinces.

### THE GROWTH OF CATHOLIC POWER

Catholicism progressed with the advance and establishment of the Conquistadores, and not many decades had gone by before the Church had begun to organize itself in the New World on the European model. With the passing of time archbishoprics were divided into bishoprics, and



these in turn into parishes, which were put in the charge of priests or, more often, monks, nuns, friars, and members of regular Orders. Among the most distinguished for their zeal were the Franciscans, Capuchins, Dominicans, Augustinians, and Jesuits.

The initial alliance of State and Church in this enterprise gradually became consolidated; the Government came to be regarded as the natural protector of the Church, and the Church as the natural supporter of the Government and its representatives, especially when either had to deal with rebellious Indians. This mutual friendship developed to such an extent that very often the Government furnished funds to start Missions; it did so in the knowledge that, once established, such Missions would become self-supporting, create new centres, and would give assistance of all kinds, sometimes even military, to the Government.

As the power of the Government grew, the Church became increasingly dependent on it, so much so that at one time the Crown almost obtained control of the Church itself. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the Popes gave the Spanish kings the right to collect, for religious purposes, Church revenues and tithes, including indulgences, to appoint bishops, and virtually to manage the whole administration of the Church.

### THE INQUISITION

From the roots struck by Catholicism in the Americas grew an embryonic American society moulded by both the beneficial and the nefarious characteristics of the Church. On the one hand, the Church was practically the only bearer of education and the sole founder of schools and universities; on the other, it was the persecutor of free-thinking and the exchange of progressive ideas. It opposed any innovation, lest radicalism should injure the political and religious foundations of its new domain. It was thus that the Inquisition made its appearance in the New World. It was given power in Brazil in 1549, Peru in 1567, and Mexico in 1572, its first tribunal being established in Lima, Peru, in 1570.

The Inquisition did not stop at mere academic con-

demnation, but imprisoned, tortured, or killed the offenders. The first *auto-da-fé* burning of a victim took place in Lima in 1573, and the second in Mexico in 1574. During the colonial period the Inquisition at Lima burned fifty-nine victims.

The Inquisition was established throughout the Spanish Americas, not only in the towns, but also in provincial settlements—in fact, wherever there were Jesuits, who were the master-minds behind this powerful machine of intellectual repression.

It was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that the Jesuits, owing to their excesses, lost favour both in Europe and the Americas and, as a result, were ousted by the most Catholic King of Portugal from his dominions. At the time of their expulsion from the Portuguese colonies 2,200 Jesuits had the direct guardianship of over 700,000 Indians spread throughout the Americas. The Pope himself finally suppressed the Order in 1773.

### THE CHURCH'S ECONOMIC POWER

Meanwhile, the power of the Church grew by leaps and bounds. The number of its ministers increased, its administration grew vast in extent, and it became extremely wealthy, with the result that individuals and groups of citizens began, in spite of the Inquisition, to complain to the colonial authorities and very often to the Metropolitan Government itself. Typical of such complaints against the Church was the petition, sent by the city government of Mexico in 1664 to Philip IV, in which the citizens asked for a suspension of ordination as there were already over 6,000 unemployed priests. At the same time they pointed out that the Church was strangling the economic life of the colony, as it already held at least half the total property. In Peru, in 1778, Antonio de Ulloa complained about the great number of convents, stating that in Lima alone there existed over forty of them.

However, the Church's stranglehold on the economic and social life of the Americas continued, and by the continuous acquisition of privately owned lands, usually tax-free, the Catholic Church controlled between one-third and one-half of all the wealth in America by 1800.

## CATHOLIC CONTROL OF EDUCATION

While the Catholic Church was becoming the dominant power in the economic, social, and—indirectly—even political fields of the developing Spanish Americas, it made even greater headway in the intellectual sphere, where it had the virtual monopoly of education and the shaping of men's minds.

As already indicated, from the very beginning the Church opened schools to teach both the natives and the Europeans; in 1553, only twenty-one years after Pizarro had first invaded the country, the University of Lima was opened, while the University of Mexico, also founded in 1553, had conferred over 30,000 Bachelor-of-Arts degrees by 1775. By 1800, educational institutions which might be termed universities were distributed throughout the principal centres of America, the largest being those of Lima, Chuquisaca, and Mexico, this last being the site of the greatest intellectual activity in America. The teachers, in the upper as well as the lower schools, colleges, and such like were invariably Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, or other priests.

However, the fact that the whole educational system was in the hands of the Church and that education was reserved exclusively for the boys of the upper classes, meant that the men who had the most influence on American society were but the obedient creatures of the Catholic Church, which by this long-range policy went on ensuring its own rule from generation to generation, shaping minds, society, and, consequently, the whole structure of the American colonies according to its religious, social, and political doctrines.

## THE PRINTING PRESS

Nevertheless the Catholic Church, despite its enormous power, was not able to keep out of Latin America all broadening influences, nor to suppress all innovations which might be used against orthodoxy. One such innovation was the printing press.

In Mexico the first printing press was set up by Mendoza as early as 1535. Although the number of printing presses remained ridiculously low (by 1800 those

in Central and South America numbering only about ten), from the start both Church and Crown did all in their power to discourage their appearance, even when they themselves controlled them.

The printing press, however, soon began its work of enlightenment, and during the first half century of the occupation books and pamphlets which did not closely conform to the orthodox rules of the time made their appearance. The number of books and pamphlets increased only slowly, but by the eighteenth century they had become a considerable force in determining the ideas of that section of society which could read and write. Then, with the opening of the nineteenth century, papers and periodicals began to be issued more and more regularly, making their way from California to Cape Horn and exerting an increasing influence, more particularly in Mexico, Lima, Buenos Aires, Bogota, and Quito.

The more progressive men—those seeking new knowledge and rebelling against the dead weight of Church and Crown—came in touch with the intellectual currents of Europe, especially of France, and consequently there were political and social repercussions in the Americas. The ideas of Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Raynal, and the Encyclopedists, together with the new wind of independence from the North American colonies, prepared those men and assisted the growth of those ideas and forces which were finally to free Latin America from the political domination of the European Powers.

The Catholic Church, as in the past, tried to stop this dissemination of ideas, first with the Inquisition and then with the Index, and often with both; so that at the close of the colonial era well over 5,500 authors had been placed on the prohibited list, Catholics who read them being *ipso facto* condemned to eternal fires by the Church.

### THE ERA OF LIBERAL REVOLUTIONS

But the Church could not prevent the growth of the Liberal and revolutionary spirit. The idea that men are born free and equal and that power resides with the people spread far and wide. Translations of the Anglo-American *Declaration of Independence* and the *Articles of the*

*Confederation* were distributed everywhere. In 1794 a student in the University of Santa Fé de Bogota obtained a copy of the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, reprinted it in hundreds of copies, and, in spite of the Catholic Church's condemnations and fulminations against those who contaminated their minds with such poisonous ideas, the principles spread like wildfire. Finally they became one of the main incitements to starting the wars of independence, which lasted more or less from 1810 until 1825. The Latin American wars of independence lasted some two and a half times as long as those which liberated the North Americans, who achieved their independence a century and a half after their foundation, whereas the Spanish colonies did not gain their freedom from European domination for three centuries. The movement for independence spread from New Mexico to Argentina and eventually 7,000,000 square miles were freed from domination—an area nearly as large as the whole North American continent.

From then onwards the economic, political, and social life of the new Latin American countries developed, sometimes slowly, very often with quick jerks and somersaults, while their populations grew with great rapidity.

The white population, which, according to Humboldt, was about 200,000 in 1600, grew to 1,000,000 in 1700 and to over 3,000,000 by 1800. In the early nineteenth century (again according to Humboldt) the white population was 3,500,000, and there were 7,500,000 aborigines and about 750,000 negroes, mulattos, and offspring of negro-Indians, called *Zambos*.

In comparison the British colonies had, at the time of their revolt, about 2,500,000 whites, 500,000 negroes in the South, and very few Indians. A few decades later, the population of the U.S.A. had increased to about 5,000,000 and that of Latin America to about 20,000,000; and in the following years the populations of both continents continued to swell until by the close of the nineteenth century the population of each approached the 100,000,000 mark.

The bulk of these millions came from Europe. In the case of Latin America almost all the immigrants came from

Spain, France, and Italy, this last country providing almost half the total number of registered immigrants to South America between 1857 and 1914.

As these immigrants were almost wholly from Catholic countries, Catholicism was more than able to hold its own, even though the political ideas which had inspired the movements for independence had been liberal and humanistic. Latin America continued to be permeated by Catholic religious and ethical doctrines and influenced deeply by the Church's notions of political and social order, and it is this domination by Catholicism which has so sharply divided Latin from North America.

### TWENTIETH-CENTURY LATIN AMERICA

In spite of the great changes which had taken place in the world, the twentieth century found the Church in Latin America the power under whose influence all aspects of life were to a great extent being continually moulded. As in the past, it was still the standard-bearer of reaction and the foremost defender of the privileged class formed by big landowners and the old aristocracy, who in turn supported the Church whenever they had power to do so. The Church and the privileged class shared a common hatred of anything new, or of anybody with new ideas, new programmes, or new slogans. Whenever a man rose to ask that the Church should relax its grip on the economic, social, and educational life of the nation, the Church indicted him as anti-Christian and anti-Catholic. Whenever a voice called for the breaking up of immense, unproductive estates, its owner was called a Nihilist or a Bolshevik—i.e., a criminal. And whenever a man or a group of men preached the combination of such ideas, the Church came out with all its armoury to fight against them.

It was thus that the Catholic Church boycotted all such demands for reform as now prevailed both in democratic and liberal North America and in Europe, and did all in its power to see that the Latin American structure of society should remain static, fearing with reason that if such ideas were allowed to penetrate it might lose the privileged position it enjoyed.

But again, as in the eighteenth century, the Catholic Church could not prevent the reforming wind of the times from sweeping the continent, with the result that organized attacks on both the Church and the *status quo* became ever more frequent; new Parties were created, went to the polls, formed Governments, and began to legislate more in conformity with the new times. The first decades of the present century saw the triumph of Liberalism in several countries, including Chile, followed by various kinds of Radicalism and even Socialism.

In 1916, for the first time a Radical, Dr. Irigoyen, was elected to the Presidency in Argentina, while his Party won thirty-five out of the sixty renewed seats in the House, which then was made up of about two-fifths Radical, one-fifth Socialist, and two-fifths Conservative.

### CATHOLICISM IN MEXICO

However, the Catholic Church never failed to stir up trouble whenever it was on the losing side, and it did this not only in the religious but also in the economic and political fields, in many instances not hesitating to resort to arms. The most typical, the fiercest, and the most ruthless struggle it waged was that initiated against Mexico during the last century; it drenched the country in blood in a desperate effort to impede reforms which aimed at putting the Church in its right place and at curtailing the enormous economic and social power it exerted there.

The first serious and successful offensive against the Church's stranglehold was launched by a small band of intellectuals advocating Liberal ideas, recruited mainly from the professional middle-class. They were able to gain sufficient power in Congress to enact in 1833-34 laws by which the Church was deprived of its monopoly of education. At the same time gross medieval privileges which exempted the Church from all taxation were abolished.

The Catholic Church and its allies, the Conservatives, took up arms against these measures, but after a bloody struggle, which lasted several months, they had to give in. From that date until almost the fourth decade of our

century, the Catholic Church has carried on a series of civil wars against progressive forces in Mexico.

Meanwhile, reforms continued to be made. In 1855, by the "Ley Juarez," the Government limited the juridical power of ecclesiastical and military courts. The following year Congress enacted the "Ley Lardo," which required the Church to sell any estates not actually used for religious purposes to the persons renting or leasing them. These reforms were followed by others, such as the "Ley Iglesias" of 1857, which compelled clergy to perform services gratuitously for the poor. Later on reforms introducing manhood suffrage, freedom of speech, of teaching, and of the Press, followed one another in quick succession.

In the Church's long struggle against such measures, priests took up arms and organized guerrilla bands; bishops incited the Mexican peoples to revolt; the Popes wrote encyclicals; Catholic generals organized Catholic armies—all in a vain attempt to stop the march of the times.

The last desperate effort of the Catholic Church in Mexico to put the clock back by resorting to violence was that engineered in 1927, when a band of armed Catholics, led by priests, surprised and attacked a train, massacring a hundred men, women, and children. That was the beginning of the Calles dictatorship. Until that time President Calles had ruled democratically but, determined to hit back at the Church, he now adopted dictatorial methods. The Church organized Catholic partisans or Cristeros, who conducted protracted guerrilla warfare from the mountains, with the successes, reverses, and atrocities (real or fictitious) which almost ten years later were to be repeated in Spain. They incited all Catholics to revolt, to fight, and even to murder—in more than one instance with success—the political leaders of the Government.

That this last civil war, started and conducted by the Catholic Church, did not develop into an international one was due chiefly to the Governments of Mexico and the U.S.A. Nevertheless the latter, under pressure from American Catholics in combination with such secular forces as the big American oil concerns, at one time went so far as to mobilize on the Mexican border practically



the whole of its aircraft (April, 1927) under the pretext of annual manœuvres.\*

After several years of internal strife, the Church finally gave up its insurrectionary struggle, but not its open and hidden attempts to regain power—attempts which it resumed on a grand scale when Roosevelt went to the White House. This bid to get the United States to intervene in the domestic life of Mexico, although backed by the oil and other industrial concerns, failed because of Roosevelt's conviction that if he followed such a plan his cherished "Good Neighbour" policy would be irredeemably doomed throughout Latin America.

Realizing that the day of open revolts was past, the Vatican then resorted to another move: the creation of a Catholic Fascist Movement by which it hoped to recover its position. This Movement received the blessing of the Papal Secretary of State, Pacelli, during and after his visit to Latin America and to President Roosevelt in 1936, as we shall see later.

Although the part played by the Catholic Church in Mexico is well known it is by no means an isolated example of such interference. The Church has worked similarly in almost every Latin American country at one time or another with varying success, but with the same goal in view—to prevent the progressive movements from disturbing its privileged position and from installing a Church-free society.

#### THE VATICAN'S ANXIETY ABOUT U.S. POLICY

So far we have seen the rôle played by the Catholic Church in the birth, growth, and direction of the internal life of Latin America. But it is in the realm of foreign policy that the Church has had the greatest influence. The Vatican's power over Latin America in this field is most important for, by being able to influence the relationships between that continent and the rest of the world, it can affect the whole Western Hemisphere and consequently Europe and the world at large.

The Vatican, like the U.S.A., began to regard Latin

\* The probability of the U.S.A. intervening in Mexico was so great that American war correspondents were advised to be in readiness at the frontier. (See G. Seldes.)

America as a powerful factor in international affairs at the beginning of this century, at a time when there were already signs of unrest beneath a superficially ordered world. The outbreak of the first world war, having released revolutionary forces in Europe and Asia, also caused a great stir in half-forgotten Latin America. Henceforth it came into the world picture ever more prominently, partly on account of its economic significance, but also because it had become the policy of the United States to enforce a monopoly to the exclusion of all non-American Powers. And the term non-American Powers was intended to include not only imperialistic Great Britain, France, and Spain, but also religious-political Powers such as the Vatican.

When the U.S.A. declared war on Germany in 1917 President Wilson became eager to befriend the Latin countries and to strengthen the Pan-American Union. This step greatly alarmed the Vatican. Latin America, unlike the U.S.A., had not previously voiced any definite policy towards Europe. It was now feared that it might be forced to echo the powerful Protestant U.S.A. At the same time, it was realized that the Vatican was still in a position to influence the policy of the United States thanks to the influence it had in Catholic America. Because of the great strategic and economic importance of those countries it had, therefore, a trump card to play in the world struggle between the Allies and the Central Powers.

The Vatican was, however, placed in a dilemma by the designs of the United States on Latin America. It had to decide whether it would be better to fight such an incursion with all the means at its disposal or to come to terms with the American Government. This dilemma was solved during and after the first world war, as we shall see in the sequel.

Before that period the Monroe doctrine had shown every symptom of being officially sponsored, not so much to keep out the European Powers, as to give the U.S.A. itself the monopoly it desired in the South. Such a policy made both Latin America and the Vatican suspicious, for it was becoming evident that the U.S.A. was bent on a thorough domination of the whole American continent, not only economic but also territorial.

## U.S.A.'s EXPANSION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

That this fear was, in fact, well founded was shown by past events, and a brief glance at the earlier expansion of the United States would have confirmed the suspicions of Latin America and the Pope.

At the very beginning the territory of the U.S.A. was confined to the lands east of the Mississippi and did not reach as far as the Gulf of Mexico. Soon vast areas claimed by Latin American countries were incorporated. In 1803 the Louisiana Purchase was acquired, followed by the annexation of the Floridas and, later on, of Texas and all the west from the present Mexican frontier to Oregon. The latter was followed by negotiations for the acquisition of Cuba, and expeditions to Nicaragua. Before the Civil War Presidents Johnson and Grant tried to get hold of the Dominican Republic and the Danish Islands. After the Spanish-American war Puerto Rico was annexed, Cuba was bound by the Platt Amendment, and Panama revolted and became closely attached to the United States. Soon afterwards the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Haiti fell under its administrative guidance, while the Danish Islands were purchased. In the meantime Alaska, Hawaii, and the Philippines had been annexed.

When one remembers that many highly placed American politicians vociferously called for further annexations of territory—e.g., the Islands in the Caribbean, as well as part of the mainland to the west of this area—it is easy to see that those who were anxious for the freedom of Latin America began to entertain a growing fear about its ultimate fate.

When finally the U.S.A. came into the first world war she exerted her influence to drag several Latin American countries in her wake, with the result that seven of these countries had soon declared war—these being Panama, Cuba, Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica, followed later by the largest of all, Brazil. Five others severed relations with Germany—Uruguay, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic. All this was against the will of the Church, but the Vatican deemed it wise to follow the political current and come to terms with the United States on the question of its Latin American policy.

At this time the United States began to pursue in earnest a policy which became known as Pan-Americanism.

### PAN-AMERICANISM

Pan-Americanism became a concrete fact, more especially in the economic field, when Latin America turned towards the United States during and after the first world war. An example of the growth of United States financial and economic influence is to be found in the fact that there was only one U.S. bank in Latin America at the beginning of the war, but by 1921 there were fifty. There was a corresponding development of trade: in 1913 the value of exchanges between the United States and Latin America was \$743,000,000, but by 1919 it had increased to \$3,000,000,000. This intermingling of American-interests also went on in other fields: for instance in that of Labour when, in 1918, a Pan-American Federation of Labour was created.

This new Pan-Americanism—which was later to change into the Good Neighbour policy—was initiated when Coolidge sent Dwight Morrow to Mexico in 1927. Continued under Hoover, it was given a new impetus at Montevideo in 1933 when Mr. Cordell Hull promised the extension of the New Deal to other American countries. It received further confirmation in 1936 when the U.S.A. subscribed to a ban on intervention by one State in the affairs of another “directly or indirectly and for whatever reason”; at Lima when, in 1938, all the American countries gave a solemn pledge of their inviolable solidarity; at Panama in 1939; and at Havana in 1940.

Thus Pan-Americanism, originally regarded by the Latin American countries as a U.S. trade slogan, finally became the cornerstone of Roosevelt's policy.

### THE VATICAN, LATIN AMERICA, AND THE LEAGUE

The Vatican, resolved upon the policy it would pursue towards inter-American relations, now determined to reach an understanding with Roosevelt. Its most valuable bargaining weapon was the influence it held on the Latin American countries themselves, and the significance of this

influence had increased with the entry of the League of Nations into world affairs.

The foundation of the League, towards which the Vatican adopted a rather hostile attitude, was welcomed by many countries, not only as a safeguard against future wars, but also as a guarantee of the national independence and integrity of the small countries anxious about the ambitions of the big ones. Partly for these reasons and partly as a result of a genuine idealism, the Latin American countries were quick to hail the birth of the League, and in spite of America's absence, or perhaps because of it, they joined *en masse*—seventeen out of the twenty being members from the very beginning.

With the passing of time, the Vatican, although resentful of their participation in the League, gradually changed its attitude and finally came to regard their presence in the international organization as extremely useful. One reason for this change of attitude was the value of the votes of the Latin American countries.

The League of Nations, unlike its successor, U.N.O., was run, at least superficially, in such a way that major decisions were voted on by all members, big or small, on democratic principles. Thus the votes of seventeen or eighteen minor countries were a great and sometimes a decisive factor which could not be disregarded. Whoever could influence these votes—whether a member of the League or not—acquired a great weight in international politics, and could thus sway issues of great importance, affecting national and international relations.

The Vatican was quick to realize that, by exerting its influence on the Latin American nations who were members of the League, it could perhaps direct the course of international politics to fit in with its own plans, and that, although outside the League, it could enhance its status as a major political power with which all nations, small or big, would have to reckon.

It soon became evident that the Vatican's influence in the League, although invisible, was nevertheless very powerful, and that whenever major issues were involved the "imponderable" vote of the Vatican was always a factor which could affect vital decisions.

This gradually became more evident when the League

was confronted with problems either relating to Catholic countries or to countries pursuing anti-Catholic policies; or whenever a nation, or even the policy of the League itself, crossed the path of the Vatican.

The seriousness of the Vatican's interference through the votes of Catholic countries, especially Latin America, was made even graver by the fact that the League and the Vatican were institutions with world-wide power. This indirect interference of the Vatican in world politics in the period between the two world wars took many forms and affected many issues of a national and international character, both in the Americas and in Europe.

To mention only a few typical examples:—

(1) When the Soviet Union asked to be admitted to the League, the strongest opposition came from Catholic individuals and Catholic countries, the Catholic delegate from Switzerland being the most violent opponent, while the Latin American countries voted *en masse* against the proposition.

(2) After Mussolini attacked Abyssinia in 1935, the League discussed the imposition of sanctions to strangle the Fascist aggression. The countries which voted against any real penalty being inflicted on Fascist Italy were mainly Catholic, the most prominent of which were the Latin American nations. (Naturally, the weight of political, military, and strategical considerations, especially on the part of Great Britain—another great power inside the League with a host of satellite countries whom she could influence to vote for or against any policy, as it might suit her interest—was one of the major factors in the issue.)

(3) During the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), the Vatican's interference in the domestic affairs of Spain, and in the international issues deriving therefrom, within as well as outside the League, became so obvious that no one even attempted to deny it. The Pope himself repeatedly asked nations and individuals to save Spain from Bolshevism by destroying the Republic and by helping the Catholic rebel Franco through diplomatic, monetary, economic, and military means.

This call, strangely enough, was answered not only by thousands of Catholic volunteers who joined Franco; not only by Latin American countries who saw that when-

ever the League attempted to intervene all its efforts to help the legal Spanish Government would miscarry, but also by those two dictators with whom the Vatican had made a tacit alliance—namely, Mussolini and Hitler.\*

This indirect interference of the Vatican in the decisions and policies of an international body like the League of Nations, and the influence it could exercise in Catholic countries and especially in Latin America, were duly noted in the United States which gradually, if slowly, began to consider whether, after all, it was not worth while to come to an understanding with Rome, particularly as it wished to further its Pan-American scheme and Good Neighbour policy. This policy could be seriously hampered if the Catholic Church chose to take a hostile attitude to it or to other American policies.

#### THE COMMON POLICY OF THE VATICAN AND THE U.S.A.

During and after the Abyssinian and Spanish Wars, these considerations became even more important, owing to the threatening behaviour of Hitler. The steady deterioration of the international situation made it vital for the U.S.A. to complete its scheme of sealing off the American continent from possible attack, at the same time consolidating it, so that if the worst came it might display to the world a continental solidarity.

The Vatican, believing that the U.S.A. would eventually come to some kind of understanding with it, had several plans of its own which fitted neatly within the framework of the American policy. These could be summarized as follows:—

(1) The consolidation of Catholicism in the United States. With a membership of over 22,000,000 the Catholic Church had such a great influence in political and social affairs that every American President or Administration had to give considerable thought to the "Catholic Vote"; †

\* For further particulars about the Vatican's intervention in Spain, see *Spain and the Vatican* in this series. For the Vatican's support of Fascism and Nazism see *The Catholic Church Against the Twentieth Century* (Watts).

† For further details of the importance of the Catholic vote in American elections see the author's *The Vatican and the U.S.A.* in this series.

(2) the linking up of North and South American Catholicism by means of a closer understanding and association between the United States and Latin America; and

(3) the formation of a mighty American bloc the general policy of which, towards dangerous revolutionary ideologies (i.e., Bolshevism and its political embodiment, Soviet Russia), should conform and run parallel to that of the Catholic Church, whose key-stone, ever since the first world war, had been her enmity towards Socialism.

### ROOSEVELT AND CARDINAL PACELLI

Roosevelt's assumption of power paved the way for all these plans. From the beginning, as already indicated, one of the most cherished of his policies was the creation of a compact Pan-American bloc, comprising North, Central, and South American peoples. Agreed on a continental policy directed towards safeguarding the general security of all the American nations, they would present a common front to non-American Powers. Whether Roosevelt set himself the task of strengthening the moral position of the U.S.A. as leader of the Americas, or whether he was actuated by a genuine desire to unite the American nations for their common benefit, is immaterial. What is important is that, in carrying out this policy, President Roosevelt, better than anyone else, realized that the friendship of the Vatican was essential if he were to rally the Central and South American countries to his project.

The success of his Good Neighbour policy depended upon the amount of support he could get from the Pope, who realized that the time was propitious and that the right man had at last arrived. Accordingly he sent his Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, on a triumphant tour of Latin America (1936).

The Vatican's representative was greeted with enthusiasm in all the Latin American countries he visited. The reception given to him not only by the Church but—what was more significant—by the various Governments, some of which sent their complete Cabinets to welcome or to



bid farewell to the Cardinal, was duly brought home just where the Vatican wished it to be—namely in Washington.

The spectacular tour of the Cardinal in South America had been well timed for another no less important reason—namely, it was undertaken just after the Spanish Civil War broke out. The Catholic Church openly sided with General Franco and launched a crusade against World Bolshevism. The full meaning of this was perfectly understood in the White House, which entertained the same Red phobia as the Vatican. Unlike the latter, however, it tried to keep it within bounds so as not to aggravate even more the troubled international situation and chronically suspicious Soviet Russia.

### THE GROWTH OF FASCISM IN LATIN AMERICA

The results of the anti-Red Crusade launched by the Pope were soon to be seen in the Americas and, significantly enough, in those countries where Cardinal Pacelli had had such a "royal" welcome. After his departure from these countries, the immediate effect was a visible strengthening of authoritarianism. Catholic Fascist Movements based on the Italian model emerged, and Catholic religious and lay advocates of the Corporate State became extremely vociferous. An unparalleled campaign against the common enemy of civilization and religion—the Socialist ideology in its various forms—was launched throughout the Americas, including the United States, which was soon flooded by atrocity stories put out by the powerful American Catholic Press.

This, it should be remembered, was the heyday of the promotion of Fascist-Catholic authoritarianism which seemed destined to characterize the century. For it must not be forgotten that the Vatican at that time was pursuing a policy of establishing authoritarianism wherever it could, especially in countries where the majority of the population was Catholic. This policy not only covered Europe but extended to the American continent, and naturally included Central and South America.

Roosevelt, although in disagreement with the Catholic Church's support of this tendency, closed an eye to it

provided he could obtain the Vatican's co-operation in persuading Latin America to favour his Good Neighbour policy. This was thoroughly discussed when the Papal delegate, Pacelli, having demonstrated the might of the Vatican's power in Latin America, visited the States during the latter part of his tour. After a whirlwind journey to the chief Catholic towns, Pacelli stayed at President Roosevelt's home as his personal guest, where the two men had ample opportunity to examine and reach complete accord on the whole problem.

First a broad understanding was reached that the Vatican should co-operate with the U.S.A. in establishing a great continental bloc composed of all the Americas, while the U.S.A. should pursue a policy in harmony with the anti-Red plan of the Vatican. Several other points of more immediate interest were also settled—namely, that the American Catholics would support Roosevelt by voting for him again; that the Catholic hierarchy would continue to support the Roosevelt administration; that, in return, Roosevelt would see that the Spanish Republic should be deprived of necessary armaments (as in fact it was),\* and further that the U.S.A. would do everything possible to re-establish diplomatic relations with Rome. These agreements both partners duly honoured in the years which followed.

At the end of the same year (1936) an inter-American Conference for the maintenance of peace was held in the capital of the leading Latin American country, Argentina. President Roosevelt himself attended the conference and initiated a new phase in his country's relations with South America. The aim of the conference, in the words of Mr. Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, was not only to maintain peace and "to make possible common action in the event that peace might be threatened," but, significantly enough, also "to prevent the rising tide of anarchy from invading this hemisphere."

This, it should be noted, was said at a time when the Pope was calling on all Christians to eradicate the "Red Plague" throughout the world.

\* For further details see the author's *The Vatican and the U.S.A.* in this series.

## LATIN AMERICA IN WORLD WAR II

The policy of Roosevelt towards Latin America, the renewed energy of the Vatican in that continent, the co-operation between the Vatican and the White House, all began to yield fruit. Latin America had in the past participated in Pan-American conferences concerned mainly with political, territorial, and financial security against foreigners in general and against the U.S.A. in particular. Its mood now changed to such an extent that as soon as war broke out in Europe all the American Republics met at Panama (September 23, 1939) to formulate a common policy which they were to adopt towards the political and economic changes that confronted them.

While the Western Hemisphere kept out of the war everything went well as far as the relationship between the Vatican and Washington was concerned, except when the latter showed too much inclination to help the Allies. At these times the Vatican was quick to remind Roosevelt of its power, not only in Latin America but also in the United States.

## CATHOLIC SYMPATHY WITH THE AXIS

Long before the outbreak of war Latin America, and indeed practically the whole Catholic Church in the Western Hemisphere, including the U.S. Catholics, were openly sympathetic towards both Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, condemning those regimes only when they quarrelled with the Vatican. This sympathy with European Fascism went so far that on more than one occasion Latin American political personalities publicly boasted of their wish for a Fascist Europe and world, stating, after the war broke out, that their hopes lay in a Nazi victory.

Such an attitude was, to say the least, a little too friendly towards an ideology which, in spite of its many points of contact with the political outlook of Latin America, was fundamentally alien to the New World.

But that such an instant and direct sympathy with European Fascism should be found in a large section of the U.S. public was very significant and illuminating, especially in view of the fact that the most vociferous

groups supporting authoritarianism were Catholic. These, in close alliance with the extreme Isolationists and super-nationalists, did all in their power to see that America should not hamper the march of either Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany, but that, on the contrary, if it had to rearm it should do so in order to fight the enemy of the Catholic Church and of civilization—namely, Soviet Russia.

This was the main theme of both Latin and North American Catholics, and it was their main theme simply because they reflected the mind of the Catholic Church. Naturally, in both South and North America there existed powerful forces having nothing to do with religion sponsoring the same policy. Nevertheless, the fact that the Catholics were the chief promoters of this tendency should not be overlooked.

The following are some typical Catholic utterances of that time :—

The Jesuit magazine *America*, on July 19, 1940, declared : “Is it the fixed purpose of the President . . . to bring this country into an undeclared war against Germany and Italy? As the Archbishop of Cincinnati has said, we have no moral justification for making war against nations . . . It is no part of our duty to prepare armaments to be used in England’s aid.”

The centre of Catholic isolationism was Father Coughlin, who, talking about Nazi Germany, stated : “Perhaps nothing is greater proof of the rottenness of the ‘empire system’ than that one single unified, clean-living people, fired by an ideal to liberate the world once and for all from an orientalist gold-debt slave system of finance, can march tireless over nation after nation, and bring two great empires to their knees.”

He even went further, and in *Social Justice* declared : “Great Britain is doomed and should be doomed. There is no danger of Hitler threatening the U.S. We should build armaments for the purpose of crushing Soviet Russia, in co-operation with the Christian Totalitarian States—Italy, Germany, Spain, and Portugal.” (Quoted by *League of Human Rights Bulletin*, Cleveland, Ohio, 1945.)

This, in a nutshell, was the main purpose of American isolationism—whether of the North or South American brand—as supported by Catholic extremists. The American hierarchy, at a time when Hitler was marching from one military success to another, raised the slogan: “Leave Europe to God,” a slogan which was shouted with ever-greater enthusiasm after Hitler at last attacked Soviet Russia (June, 1941).

Catholics all over the Continent, and above all in the U.S.A., were overjoyed by the news of this attack and were firmly opposed to any voice which was raised or any move made to help the Allies. When Roosevelt continued to manoeuvre in order to help England (and thus Soviet Russia), the Catholics to the man turned against him; indeed, they went so far that some of their spokesmen (such as Mgr. Duffy of Buffalo) declared that if the United States should ever become an ally of Soviet Russia they would publicly ask Catholic soldiers to refuse to fight.

In the U.S.A. this sort of isolationism was silenced by Pearl Harbour in December, 1941, but in Latin America it persisted almost throughout the war. This notwithstanding the fact that the attack on the U.S.A. was followed by a spontaneous manifestation of Continental solidarity and that within a comparatively short period nine Republics had declared war on Japan. By May, 1942, ten Republics, among whom were the five Central American countries of Panama, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mexico, had declared war on the Axis, while the others, with the exceptions of Argentina and Chile, had severed relations with the aggressor Powers.

For a time the friendship between America and the Vatican became very strained, the latter feeling profoundly displeased that the U.S.A. should have employed its influence in persuading so many Latin American countries to side with the Allies. Such a move was diametrically opposed to the grand policy the Church was then pursuing in Europe.

When the Fascist and Nazi dictatorship began to have serious setbacks those Latin American countries which still resented the Anglo-American partnership with Russia quickly fell into line with Roosevelt's policy, and by the spring of 1945, almost all had come into the war.

This gradual change of heart was due not only to a natural desire to side with the winning Powers, but was largely determined by direct pressure from the Vatican. Realizing in what direction the wind blew and having reorientated its policy to the new situation, the Vatican saw to it that the Latin American countries should take such steps that their bargaining power with a victorious U.S.A. would not be lost.

The key-stone of the Vatican's policy, however, did not change—that is, its hostility towards Soviet Russia, whom it continued to regard as Enemy No. 1, not only of the Catholic Church, but also of Europe, of the U.S.A., and all the Americas. When it was certain that the Fascist building was doomed, the Church made a bid for time, in the sure knowledge that the rift between America and Soviet Russia would inevitably widen with the coming of peace. It bore without flinching the crumbling of the pro-Fascist policy it had pursued between the two world wars, confident that sooner or later both North and South America would become its partners in the fight against Soviet Russia and world Bolshevism.

### THE REVIVAL OF TOTALITARIANISM

But, while the armed might of the Allied armies was steadily and finally crushing the Axis, the Vatican was already laying down its plans for a post-war counter-offensive. By 1946, only a year after the conclusion of the second world war, Fascism, sponsored chiefly by the Catholic Church, had already raised its head in many countries, disguised in the form of peaceful democratic movements. These, however, did not deceive any careful observer as to their tactics and ultimate aims.

As far as Latin America is concerned, the Vatican, even before the end of the war, had taken important steps to ensure the come-back of Right-wing totalitarianism in that continent. Several Latin American Republics were already nursing movements which had all the semblance of the pre-war Fascist Movements; and non-religious elements were elbowing their way to the political platform in order to be ready when the right time and opportunity

should occur. Such movements, with one or two exceptions, were powerfully supported by the Catholic Church.

### ARGENTINA

In the Argentine, for instance, ominous symptoms of the revival of the momentarily defeated Catholic Fascism were to be found in abundance immediately before and after the second world war. Under the administration of Dr. Olmedo (a great Catholic and Director of Education), the religious, political, and racial discriminations characteristic of totalitarianism were in evidence again when orders were issued that Protestant, Liberal, and Jewish teachers should be tacitly dropped from State schools. In 1944 Catholic teaching was made obligatory in all primary and secondary schools, and 182 teachers who dared to excuse themselves from teaching religion were promptly dismissed. After the war numerous priests renewed their political activities sponsoring totalitarianism, and making more or less open attacks against democracy. Among these was Father Sepich, who declared: "We do not want elections . . . we want Government."

### MEXICO

But the most illuminating counter-attack launched by the Vatican was in Mexico itself. It is here that the Catholic Church has made ominous progress during and since the second world war with a movement the structure and aims of which are fundamentally of the Catholic-totalitarian nature so typical of Fascism between the two wars.

The preparatory moves were made as far back as 1936 after Cardinal Pacelli's visit to Latin America, to which we have already referred. The movement came into the open in 1937, under the name of La Union Nacional Sinarquista, later called Sinarquism. It was a mixture of Catholic dictatorship on the model of Franco's, of Fascism, Nazism, and the Ku-Klux-Klan. It had a sixteen-point plan. It openly declared war on democracy and all other enemies of the Catholic Church, and had as its main object the restoration of the Catholic Church to its former power.

Its members were mostly devout Catholics, and it was

soon recognized as "the most dangerous Fascist movement in Latin America." Even U.S. Catholic papers declared that "if Sinarquism succeeded in its purpose of increasing its numbers considerably, there is real danger of civil war." (See *The Commonweal* and *Catholic Herald*, August 4, 1944.) By 1944 it was reckoned that it had between 1,000,000 and 1,500,000 members, while by 1946, a year after the defeat of Germany, its power had greatly increased and its hostility towards democracy and Socialism had come out into the open more clearly than ever before. Priests, bishops, and archbishops were not only supporting it, but becoming active members, exercising their influence to enlist Catholics in the rank and file of the Party.

### THE VATICAN AND FRANCO

But, in addition to nursing and encouraging local totalitarian currents, with the dawn of peace the Vatican put its trust in another powerful instrument for spreading totalitarianism in Latin America—namely, the racial, cultural, and political influence of Catholic Spain, the only surviving Fascist State in Europe.

This instrument, which had been prepared by Franco at the very beginning of the second world war, was forged not only by the Spanish Dictator, but also by the Spanish Church, with the active help of the Vatican.

These preparations would be useful whatever the outcome of the war. If Nazism won they would have been very useful in hastening Fascism in the Spanish-speaking countries; if it lost, then they would become even more valuable for maintaining a link with and encouraging Latin American Catholic Fascism.

These preparations, by the way, were an integral part of Hitler's plan which aimed at the creation of a Latin-European-Latin-American bloc under the ægis of a Nazified France—a plan which, with the fall of Hitler, was handed over to Catholic Franco, who, incidentally, was one of its most enthusiastic supporters from the very beginning.\*

The activities of Franco and the Vatican, begun during

\* For further details see *The Catholic Church Against the Twentieth Century* (Watts).



the second world war, were given great impetus with the coming of peace and were mainly directed to co-ordinating all the remaining Nazi-Fascist movements into one broad movement sponsoring Catholic totalitarianism throughout Latin America.

This work was carried out mainly through Franco's Falange Exterior and its various diplomatic and cultural organizations in America, another of whose tasks was that of linking the Spanish Falange with the Portuguese Legião in the Iberian peninsula. The Falange in Cuba, for instance, was linked up with Mexican Sinarquismo and closely connected with the various *coups d'état* which in Argentina, and then in Brazil, followed the end of the second world war.

In the last named country, President Vargas was thrown out of office by General Goes Monteiro, who during the war was so openly pro-German and so keen a supporter of Fascism that when Brazil finally joined the Allies he had to "resign" from the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Brazilian Army.

To show how the Vatican was behind this trend in Brazil, as well as in various other countries, suffice it to say that it went so far as to excommunicate one of its own bishops, Carlos Duarte.

"I was excommunicated," said the Bishop, "for my exposure of the Hispanidad movement in the Brazilian See and in other American countries. Hispanidad is the Falange in action. In the organization were representatives of the Spanish and Portuguese Fascist Parties, the Legião and the Falange. The leader of the organization in Brazil was Ramon Cuesta, the Spanish Ambassador, who directed all Falangist activities in South America from Rio de Janeiro. Cuesta maintained contact with the whole of America, organizing a movement aimed at the creation of Franco's Iberian 'Empire.' Political Imperialism is trying to survive in the Americas under the leadership of the Vatican and Generalissimo Franco." Mgr. Duarte Costa, Rio de Janeiro, July 1945.)

By 1946 South American Fascism had control of a string of seven important and a dozen minor newspapers in Havana, Bogota, Quito, Mexico, Santiago, Caracas, Panama, and other centres.

As in Europe and in the U.S.A., the Vatican entered the post-war world with a grand strategical plan with which it hoped, not only to retain but to further its spiritual and political dominion throughout Central and South America. The fact that it was able to begin the initial moves with such assurance, even before the end of the war, demonstrates beyond doubt not only the immense pertinacity and vitality of the Catholic Church, but also, and above all, its determination to resume in earnest its task of reorganizing Catholic authoritarianism in the Western Hemisphere.

Whether it will succeed or not, only time will show.

### THE VATICAN'S POWER IN LATIN AMERICA

The extent to which the Vatican can influence Latin America is the outcome of the power which an overwhelming religious authority can exercise on ethical, social, and political affairs in modern society. This is particularly true of this group of countries where it has ruled and is to a very great extent still ruling virtually unchallenged. It must be remembered that the whole continent is still pervaded from top to bottom by the spirit and ethical ideas of the Catholic Church. Except for a small minority every member of a Latin-American Republic is born, is nurtured, and dies in an atmosphere of Catholicism. Even those who do not practise the religion cannot escape the effects of a society in which the Church permeates all its economic, political, social, and cultural classes.

Whether the widespread illiteracy which still pervades Latin America is due mainly to the Catholic Church or to other causes we cannot tell. But in South America there is more illiteracy than in any other land inhabited by a white race. To quote only a few figures, in 1939 Europe and the U.S.S.R., which still had enormous backward areas, had about 8 per cent illiteracy. Japan, which less than a century before had been one of the most illiterate countries, by 1935 had the lowest percentage of illiteracy in the whole world—namely, less than 1 per cent. In contrast to this, its neighbours, the Philippines, where Catholicism had been dominant for centuries, still had 35 per cent illiteracy, while Mexico, one of the most pro-

gressive Latin-American countries, had to cope with 45 per cent illiteracy, in spite of the enormous efforts of her Governments. Brazil had more than 60 per cent, coming third in illiteracy to the Netherland East Indies, with 97 per cent, and British India with 90 per cent.

In this state of affairs the Church is allied with those elements of a social and economic nature whose interest it is to maintain the *status quo* as long as possible—or, at least, with as little change as possible. Such elements are perfectly aware that their rule is essentially dependent on the maintenance of an illiterate and ignorant populace, which can be very easily dominated by both spiritual and secular powers whose main object is but the attainment of their own particular sectional aims. Hence the centuries-old alliance between Church and big landowners or business magnates, who in Latin America perhaps more than anywhere else are still the paramount factors shaping the destiny of that continent.

In Latin America religion—in this case the Catholic Church—has been one of the most disturbing factors, and is still a predominant force influencing all strata of society, not only in the most backward regions but also in the most economically and culturally advanced countries, such as Brazil and Argentina.

In the latter in 1946 literacy was the highest in Latin America, owing chiefly to the liberal forces which since the opening of the century have fought bravely against the Catholic Church's hold. In 1900, for instance, fully half the population of that country was still illiterate. This was reduced at the rate of about 1 per cent per year until 1914, in which year between 35 and 45 per cent were still illiterate; by 1930 this had been reduced to 25 per cent; and by the end of the second world war to about 18 per cent.

This is undoubtedly remarkable progress, and one would expect that with the advance of literacy and culture the most characteristic feature of the Catholic Church's predominance in the life of the country concerned would automatically diminish. But that is not the case, as is demonstrated by innumerable examples, one of the most illuminating being the instance, just before the end of the second world war, when the Virgin Mary was solemnly

made an honorary General of the Argentine Army, with a regular salary (labelled "vivaticum" and assigned to her from the public treasury) of ten dollars a day, duly collected by the Church.\* This, it must be remembered, was not in a country where great sections of society are formed of backward negroes or Indians, but in a country made up almost entirely of European peoples (immigration statistics between 1857 and 1913 indicate that of the 4,500,000 registered immigrants, almost exactly 50 per cent were Italians, 31 per cent Spaniards, 5 per cent French, and 14 per cent Europeans of other nationalities).

How far the Catholic Church has been responsible for the comparatively slow economic progress made by Latin America is extremely difficult to assess. The last fifteen years, however, have seen an enormous development of the economic resources of the continent owing to the adoption of modern methods and mechanization, and to the dynamic influence of the U.S.A., as well as to the greater demands of an impoverished and war-torn Europe. (In 1929, if the purchasing power of a citizen of the U.S.A. were placed at 100, that of an Argentinian would have been only 32, and this figure would have been higher than that for any other Latin country, the figure for the poorest being less than 5.—G. J. Ede.)

To-day, although in comparison with the wealthy United States, Latin America is still in a rather backward state economically, the strides that it is making in the development of its lands, mines, forests, and industries are gigantic. In consequence, with the further growth of its economic and financial strength, its political stature in the world will be further enhanced.

What will this mean from the point of view of the Vatican, tirelessly spinning its world-wide web in spiritual, social, diplomatic, and political fields, never losing an opportunity to influence men, nations, and even continents in order to foster its religious hold upon twentieth century society?

\* When talking to an Argentine friend about this, he reminded me that, as the Virgin Mary to the average good Catholic is not a myth but a real personage, the act of conferring upon her the title of General was no more nor less worthy of mirth than that of the English making their Queen a Colonel of the Grenadier Guards.

As Latin America grows in economic and political power, the hold of the Vatican in world politics will grow with it. This will be achieved by (a) continuing to exert its influence over the Latin American peoples and Governments, it will shape their social life and determine their domestic political policies; (b) by using its power *vis-à-vis* foreign countries, to influence international and world politics.

It is from this point of view that Latin America has become such an important factor and is becoming increasingly so, not only in American but also in European and, indeed, world politics.

While realizing this, one must remember the rôle that the Vatican has played in Europe between the two world wars, its efforts to help secular reactionary forces to shape the European continent on the foundations of a Fascist-Nazi ideology, its relentless enmity to the progressive forces of our century, the war it has waged and goes on waging against Socialism, the plans it has already started to put into execution with the collapse of Fascism in Europe, and its ultimate aims in spiritual and political fields. Then the importance of the growing weight of a Catholic Latin America will clearly emerge from the blurred picture of international politics and will be seen in a light which should help everyone to realize what a tremendous political power the Vatican still is in the middle of the twentieth century.

The Catholic Church has already made gigantic steps towards conquering the American continent and is hastening the tempo of its activities to amalgamate North and South American Catholicism (this in close alliance with powerful economic and political forces).\* Once the Western Hemisphere has been cemented into a solid Catholic bloc, the Church, backed by the wealth and political dominion of the American peoples, will be ready for a counter-attack on those social currents and nations which have compelled it to retreat from its leading rôle in the life of many other peoples.

\* For further details about the Vatican's long-range plan to conquer the whole of the American Continent for Catholicism see *The Catholic Church Against the Twentieth Century*, by the same author (Watts).

How soon will the Church do it? To give an answer would be mere guesswork.

In the meantime, the Vatican goes on with its work of consolidating itself in the New World, a great part of which—Latin America—continues to be its powerful and undisputed domain.

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