

LATIN AMERICA'S STUDENT REVOLUTION¹

BY VICTOR RAUL HAYA DE LA TORRE

[SEÑOR Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, who has been called *el primer estudiante de America Latina*, was President of the Federation of Students of Peru and of the National Council of Peruvian Students during the 'university revolution' in that country. Later he founded six universities for workingmen, all supported by students; and in order to cultivate a fraternal spirit among Latin-American students of all nationalities he traveled through the principal countries of the continent, remaining for a long time in Chile, where the hostility to Peru was greatest. He was active in inaugurating another workingmen's university in Havana, Cuba, and is now Honorary President of the Student Federations of both Cuba and Peru. He is also a leader of the anti-imperialistic movement in Latin America, and founder of the A. P. R. A., or Revolutionary Association of the Peoples of America, which seeks to unite manual and intellectual workers in a campaign to resist North American aggression and to unite the Latin-American countries.]

A VAST intellectual renaissance has manifested itself among the students of Latin America, which shows a profound divergence between the thought of the rising generation and of the generation that preceded it. These students are championing new principles and adopting new attitudes, not only toward intellectual life, but also

toward political and social policies, which are capable of being converted later into more precise forms of action. Thus a conflict has arisen between the younger and the older generation. The young are following no master, for they have denied all. Two or three men of outstanding importance, such as José Vasconcelos in Mexico and José Ingenieros in Argentina, have allied themselves with this movement. But the insurgence of youth is spontaneous and self-directed in every country of the great continent.

The present agitation began with a so-called 'university revolution' at the University of Cordoba in Argentina eight years ago. Just as the first religious reform of the sixteenth century began with what were called 'monks' squabbles,' so the first disturbances at Cordoba were called 'students' squabbles.' Very few realized the serious character of the movement, but the students, with admirable intuition, grasped its full importance, and proclaimed it 'Latin America's Revolution for Intellectual Autonomy.'

The universities of Latin America are almost all of Spanish origin, founded during the three centuries of colonial rule. Until the 'university revolution' higher educational curricula remained antiquated, without appreciable progress, based on religious prejudices. Liberal ideas had scarcely entered them, and the pedagogical system, as well as the spirit of these universities, was afflicted with all the defects of the old Spanish universities, controlled by

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dogma and semi-ecclesiastical. The restless discontent of the Latin-American students carried them far beyond the intellectual frontiers which, like rings of iron, the universities marked out for them. New ideas agitated their young brains, and a desire arose to convert these old universities into new laboratories of science and seminaries of modern culture. The terrible spectacle of the European War, the intervention of America in the war, the Russian Revolution, which Latin-American youth hailed as the beginning of the liberty of the world, stirred still more the consciences of the students. It can easily be understood that Latin America was obliged to shake herself free from old systems of education and to attempt a better life. But tradition, the interests of the dynasty of the 'learned,' Catholic influence as changeless as a Spanish relic, all set their faces against the students' proposals. The masters of the Latin-American universities exercised a truly implacable dictatorship. For them the old was symbolic of wisdom, and they denied all attention to every suggestion of the students, whatever it was.

The opposition between the new spirit of youth and the extreme conservatism of the university faculties came to a head at the end of July 1918 in the University of Cordoba, which was founded in 1614 by the Spanish friar Trejo y Zanabria. The students launched a true revolution, demanding the repeal of the old university statutes, change of professors, abolition of ecclesiastical control over higher instruction, professorships open to all, academic freedom, and other reforms. They demanded the right to have student representatives in the directing council of the universities, and their right to share in the election of professors. The movement was violent and full of curious episodes. The

University of Cordoba was invaded and occupied *manu militari* by the students.

News of the revolution reverberated throughout Latin America and immediately called forth recognition and sympathy. Messages of support and solidarity were sent to the rebelling students from all the universities. The strike committee of Cordoba issued an appeal to the Latin-American students in these words: 'If in the name of order others desire to prosecute us, ridicule us, use force against us, let us proclaim aloud that the sacred right of insurrection, the only door remaining open to us, the only door remaining open to hope, is the heroic birthright of youth. Persecution only makes us stronger. The spiritual redemption of American youth is the only reward we seek, because we know that the ills from which we suffer are the ills of all the continent.'

The revolution soon spread. At Buenos Aires and La Plata, the two most important Argentine universities, student strikes were proclaimed. The violent struggle between the students and the professors continued the whole of the year 1918. The intervention of the Government and of the police and military forces resulted only in increasing the sympathy of the public with the insurrection. In the end the Government was obliged to yield; new statutes were issued for the old universities, others were founded, and the organization of a modern university system, based on the liberal principles of the students, was started.

In the first months of 1919 a similar 'university revolution' broke out in the University of Lima, Peru, the oldest in America, founded in 1551. The University of Lima was completely dominated by an antiquated spirit. The students proclaimed a general strike, demanded the dismissal of

sixteen professors, the suppression of the courses in canon law, the complete remaking of the regulations governing the university, professorships open to all, academic freedom, and the participation of the students in the governing councils. The strike in Lima lasted more than four months. The campaign of the students was very intense, and there came a moment in which the industrial workers of the country offered their adhesion to the movement. Faced by so strong an agitation, the Peruvian Parliament was compelled to vote laws favorable to the students' demands.

Similar movements occurred in 1921, 1922, and 1923 in other Latin-American universities, the most notable being those of Havana, Cuba, and Santiago de Chile. In all the universities of Latin America, since the 'revolution' a change in method has taken place, and a new spirit has arisen, through this rebellion of youth.

In 1921 an international congress of students assembled in the city of Mexico. This congress was a true Latin-American congress although there were present some representatives from Europe, Asia, and North America — Germany, China, and the United States. The true inspirer of the Congress at Mexico was an Argentine student from the University of La Plata, Hector Ripa Alberdi. The first resolution of the Congress says: 'The Latin-American students proclaim that they are struggling for the advent of a new humanity founded on the modern principles of economic and political justice.' The third resolution says: 'The students of Latin America proclaim their optimism regarding the grave problems which are agitating the world, and their absolute confidence in the possibility of attaining — by the renovation of economic and moral ideas — a new social organi-

zation which will permit the realization of the spiritual aims of man.'

Among the Chilean students there developed as well an antimilitaristic campaign. Between Chile and Peru national questions had thrust themselves ever since the war between the two countries in 1879. The students of both nations have proclaimed their opposition to the rivalry and discord which animate the policies of their Governments. In 1920 the Chilean students were prosecuted as anti-patriotic, and bloody clashes occurred between the army and police and the students.

In that same year the students of Peru, assembled in a national congress in the old city of Cuzco, resolved to found popular universities for the workers, to study social problems, to demand the defense of the rights of the Indians, and to proclaim as the goal of their public acts social justice.

But the ideology of Latin-American students advances, exacting more of itself all the time. In Peru, in Chile, in Cuba, in Guatemala, in Mexico, and in other countries, the students have founded popular universities, centres of education for the workers and peasants. This closer contact between workers and students has formed in each republic of Latin America a strong vanguard of youth that includes both manual and intellectual workers.

The growing domination of the United States over Latin America was immediately detected by the students. It was they who raised the cry of warning. The opposition between the old and the young is today stronger than ever. The old are nationalists, anxious to keep Latin America divided into twenty republics; but the students have declared themselves against this nationalism and in favor of a political union of America,

and accuse the old politicians of complicity in imperialism. Latin-American students are awake to a danger which threatens all their peoples. For this reason they are trying to bring about a union between themselves and the workers and peasants in order to resist every nationalistic division within Latin America itself. Solidarity with the people of the countries most menaced by American imperialism, such as Mexico, Cuba, Santo Domingo,

Nicaragua, and Panama, is to-day the motive of great campaigns of propaganda among the Latin-American students.

I believe the most precise idea among the students to-day is that of realizing this unity of Latin America, overcoming the double resistance which is opposing itself to this goal—the imperialistic policy of the United States, and the nationalism which the governing classes keep alive in each republic.

TO AN ORANGE

BY ROSE FYLEMAN

[*Spectator*]

FOR N. L.

IN days gone by we thought you rather vulgar,
 Playing a humble — tho' not hidden — part,
 The darling of the undiscerning many,
 Sold from a stall (at two or three a penny)
 Or coster's cart.

And yet at times, caught by your golden beauty,
 One wondered — 'Was 't perchance such fruits as these
 That tempted Atalanta's feet to dally,
 Or burned among the boughs in some bright alley
 Of the Hesperides?'

But all things change, and you are scorned no longer,
 But honored, sought, acclaimed on pictured page;
 No more your lovers are apologetic;
 To be concerned with matters dietetic
 Is all the rage.

And now you yield to neither pines nor peaches,
 To muscats pale, nor delicate nectarines,
 But cheerfully adorn the proudest table,
 Since yours it is to bear the glorious label —
 'Richest in Vitamines!'

AMERICA: QUIXOTE OR SHYLOCK?¹

BY A. WYATT TILBY

AMERICA will be rich, prosperous, and wealthy as the result of this war. We shall have made untold millions of this wealth out of the woe and swelter of Europe. The money which has come to us from these people is money in trust, and unless America recognizes this trust she will pay dearly and bitterly for its possession. — Mr. HOOVER, February 1917

LESS than ten years ago the President and people of the United States were lauded as a nation of idealists—generous crusaders who were speeding across the seas to the succor of distressed and devastated Europe. The same people is denounced in many quarters to-day as a race of vampires, bloodsuckers, and hypocrites, who saved Europe only to starve her, and engaged in her quarrels only to enslave her.

The contrast is too sudden and too violent to be entirely credible. Don Quixote does not turn into Shylock in real life, or the Chevalier Bayard change overnight into the miser Grandet. The chivalrous knight may prove on closer acquaintance somewhat less like Galahad than we thought him. But it is improbable that he will turn out to be the traitor Mordred in disguise.

It is certain that no nation could live up to the inflated standard of virtue attributed to the Americans in 1918. It is unlikely that any nation could be quite so base as the Americans are alleged to be in 1926. The truth presumably lies somewhere be-

tween the two extremes. The hero may not be the low huckster he is at present painted by the caricaturists. But even in the golden days of chivalry valiant knights are said occasionally to have condescended to live on the countries they rescued from the tyranny of the local giant. And it is at least possible that the splendid crusader sometimes showed himself possessed of as keen an eye for a bargain in cheap castles as for dragon-slaying, and that there were dismal moments when distressed maidens thought the fee for delivery from thralldom a little high.

However that may be, it is impossible to deny that the reputation of the United States has fallen heavily in Europe since the Treaty of Versailles; and that not merely with the unthinking mob, but among men who are careful not to form their judgment without some evidence, and whose opinion is therefore generally worth attention. Where there is smoke, says the proverb, there is fire; and when the prestige of a nation diminishes there is usually some genuine cause for the decline.

In the present case the main reason for the fall of American reputation in Europe has obviously been the insistence of the United States, whether right or wrong, on the repayment of

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