

COMMUNISM AND DEMOCRACY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

JUAN BOSCH

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO.

AFTER the U.S. intervention in Santo Domingo, the Department of State first released a list of fifty-five Dominican Communists; then a list of fifty-eight; and finally, a list of twenty-seven.

When I was President of the Dominican Republic, I calculated that in Santo Domingo there were between 700 and 800 Communists, and I estimated the number of Communist sympathizers at between 3,000 and 3,500. These 700-800 Communists were divided into three groups, of which, in my judgment, the largest was the Popular Dominican Movement, with perhaps between 400 and 500 members in the entire country; next came the Popular Socialist Party with somewhat less, around 300 to 400; and then, in a number that in my opinion did not reach fifty, the Communists who infiltrated the June 14th Movement, some of them in executive posts and others at lower levels.

I ought to make clear that in 1963 in the Dominican Republic there was much political confusion, and a large number of people, especially middle-class youth, did not know for certain what they were and what they wanted to be, whether democrats or Communists. But that has changed in almost all countries where there have been prolonged dictatorships, once the dictatorships pass. After a certain time has elapsed and the political panorama becomes clarified, many people who began their public life as Communists pass into the democratic camp. In 1963 the Dominican Republic needed time for the democratic system to clear up the confusion, and in a sense the time was used that way, since 700 or 800 Communists, divided in three groups,

with sympathizers numbering between 3,000 and 3,500, could in no case—not even with arms in their hands—take power or even represent a serious threat.

If there weren't enough Communists to take power, there was, on the other hand, a strong sentiment against persecution of the Communists. This feeling developed because during his long tyranny Trujillo always accused his adversaries of being Communists. Because of that, anti-Communism and Trujilloism ended up being equivalent terms in the Dominican political vocabulary. Moreover, the instruments of oppression—the police and the armed forces—remained the same in 1963—with the same men who had served under Trujillo. If I had used them against the Communists I would have ended up as their prisoner, and they, for their part, would have completely destroyed the Dominican democratic forces. For those men, having learned from Trujillo, there was no distinction between democrats and Communists; anyone who opposed any of their violence, or even their corruption, was a Communist and ought to be annihilated.

My presumption was correct, as events have shown. From the dawn of September 25, the day of the coup d'état against the government I headed, the police began to persecute and beat without mercy all the non-Communist democrats who in the opinion of the military chiefs would be able to resist the coup. It was known that in all the country not one Communist had infiltrated my party, the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), but still the leaders and members of that party were persecuted as Communists. The chief of police himself insulted the prisoners by calling them Communists. Many leaders of the PRD were deported,

and—a curious fact—numerous Communists who had been in Europe, Russia, and Cuba were permitted to return. But the leaders of the PRD were not permitted to return, and if one did he was immediately deported again. During the nineteen months of the government of Donald Reid, thousands of democrats from the PRD and hundreds from the Social Christian Party and the June 14th Movement were jailed, deported, and beaten in a barbaric manner; the headquarters of these three parties were assaulted or destroyed by the police. All the vehicles, desks, typewriters and other valuable effects of the PRD were robbed by the police. In the months of May and June, 1964, more than 1,000 members of the PRD who had been accused of being Communists were in jail at one time.

That "anti-Communist" fury launched against the democratic Dominicans was an important factor in the eruption of the April revolution because the people

JUAN BOSCH is the first man in the history of the Dominican Republic to have become its President through a free election. He won his overwhelming—and surprising victory in December, 1962. But in September, 1963, he was overthrown by the military. In April of this year, pro-Bosch forces revolted against the government of Donald Reid, leading to the present crisis. This article appears in *SR* through special arrangement with *War/Peace Report* in which Mr. Bosch's article is also carried this week.



—Camera Press-Pix.

Juan Bosch

were fighting to regain their right to live under a legal order, not a police state. If it had been I who unleashed that fury, the revolution would have been against the democratic regime, not in favor of democracy.

It was not necessary to be a political genius to realize that if "anti-Communist" persecution began in the Dominican Republic, the police and the military would also persecute the democrats. Neither need one be a political genius to understand that what the country needed was not stimulation of the mad forces of Trujilloism which still existed in the police and the military, but rather the strengthening of democracy by demonstrating to the Dominicans in practice that what was best for them and the country was to live under the legal order of a democratic regime.

Now then, in the Dominican picture there was a force that in my opinion was determining the pointer of the political balance, in terms of ideologies and doctrines, and that force was the June 14th Movement.

I have said that according to my calculations there was in the June 14th Movement an infiltration of less than fifty Communists, some of them in executive positions and others at lower levels. But I must state that control of this party, at all levels, was held by an overwhelming majority of young people who were not Communists and some of

whom were strongly anti-Communist. How can one explain that there should be Communists together with non-Communists and active anti-Communists? There is one reason: the June 14th Movement was based, in all its breadth and at all its levels, on intense nationalism, and that nationalism was manifested above all in terms of strong anti-Americanism. To convert that *anti-norteamericanismo* into *dominicanismo* there was only one way: maintain for a long time a democratic regime with a dynamic and creative sense.

I KNEW that if the country saw the establishment of a government that was not elected by the people—that was not constitutional and not respectful of civil liberties—the Communists would attribute this new government to U.S. maneuvers. I also knew that in view of the anti-Americanism of the youth of the middle class—especially in the June 14th Movement—Communist influence would increase. The equilibrium of the political balance was, then, in that party. Any sensible Dominican politician realized that. The trouble was that in 1963 the Dominican Republic did not have sensible politicians, or at least not enough of them. The appetites for power held in check for a third of a century overflowed, and the politicians turned to conspiring with Trujillo's military men. The immediate result was the coup of Sep-

tember, 1963; the delayed result was the revolution of April, 1965.

It is easy to understand why Dominican youth of the middle class was nationalistic. This youth loved its country, wanted to see it morally and politically clean, hoped for its economic development, and thought—with reason—that it was Trujillo who blocked morality, liberty, and development of the country. It is also easy to understand why this nationalism took the form of anti-Americanism. It was simply a feeling of frustration. This youth, which had not been able to get rid of Trujillo, thought that Trujillo was in power because of his support by the United States. For them, the United States and Trujillo were partners, both to be blamed for what was happening in the Dominican Republic, and for that reason the hate for Trujillo was naturally converted into feelings of anti-Americanism.

I am not discussing here whether they were right or wrong; I am simply stating the fact. I know that in the United States there are people who supported Trujillo and others who attacked him. But the young Dominicans knew only the form and not the latter, since Trujillo took care to give the greatest publicity possible to any demonstration of support, however small, that was offered directly or indirectly by a U.S. citizen, whether he was a Senator or an ordinary tourist, and on the other hand, he took great pains to prevent even the smallest notice in the Dominican Republic of any attack by an American citizen. Thus, the Dominican youth knew only that Trujillo had defenders in the United States, and that he had enemies.

For his part, Trujillo succeeded in creating with the Dominican people an image of unity between society and government that can only be compared with what has been produced in countries with Communist regimes. For more than thirty years in the Dominican Republic nothing happened—nothing *could* happen—without an express order from Trujillo. In the minds of Dominican youth this image was generalized, and they thought that in the United States nothing could happen without an order from whoever governed in Washington. Thus, for them, when an American Senator, newspaperman or businessman expressed his support of Trujillo, the person was talking by order of the President of the United States. To this day, a large number of Dominicans of the middle class think that everything a U.S. citizen says, his government is saying too.

The pointer of the political balance as I said earlier, was in the June 14th Movement, which was saturated with anti-Americanism. This group included the most fervent youths and even the best qualified technically—but not I



"Please say something in corporatese."

litically—as well as the more numerous nucleus of middle-class youth; it also constituted the social sector where Communist sermons could have the most effect and from whence could come the resolute leaders that the Communists lacked. Trujillo had tortured, assassinated and made martyrs of hundreds of members of the June 14th Movement. To persecute these youths was to send them into the arms of Communism, to give strength to the arguments of the few Communists that had infiltrated the Movement. The Communists said that the democracy that I headed received its orders from Washington, the same as had Trujillo, to destroy the nationalistic youths. Little by little, as the days passed, the non-Communist and anti-Communist members of the June 14th Movement were gaining ground against the Communists, since they were able to prove to their companions that my democratic government neither persecuted them nor took orders from Washington. In four years, the democratic but nationalistic sector of the June 14th Movement—which was in the overwhelming majority—would have ended the Communist influence and made itself into a firm support of Dominican democracy.

THE weakness of the Dominican Communists was also shown by the activity of the Social Christian Party, which presented itself as militantly anti-Communist. It persecuted the Communists everywhere, to the point that they could not show themselves in public. But when the Social Christians realized that the best source of young people in the country was the June 14th Movement, they stopped their street fighting against the Communists and began a campaign against *imperialismo norteamericano*. When they showed with this battle cry that they were not a pro-U.S. party, they began to attract young adherents who had been members of the June 14th Movement as well as many others who already had a clear idea of what they wanted to be: nationalists and democrats. Thus, the Social Christian leaders came to understand that the key to the Dominican political future lay in assuring the nationalistic youth of a worthy and constructive democracy.

What the Social Christians learned by 1963 would have been understood by other political groups if the Dominican democracy had been given time. But this was not to be. Reactionaries in the Dominican Republic and the United States set themselves ferociously against the Dominican democracy under the slogan that my government was “soft” on the Communists.

This is the point at which to analyze “weakness” and “force,” if those two terms signify opposite concepts. There



“Tonight he knows the solution to all economic and social problems. Tomorrow when he faces the world, he’ll be his old frustrated self again.”

are two ways to face problems, particularly political ones. One is to use intelligence and the other is to use force. According to this theory, intelligence is weak, and the use of intelligence, a sign of weakness.

I think that a subject so complex as political feelings and ideas ought to be treated with intelligence. I think also that force is a concept that expresses different values, as can be seen in the United States or in the Dominican Republic. In the U.S., the use of force means the application of the law—without crimes, without torture, without medieval barbarism; in the Dominican Republic, it means quite the contrary: one does not apply the law without instruments of torture, not excluding assassination. When a Dominican policeman says of a person that he is a Communist, he is saying that he, the policeman, has the full right to beat him, to shoot him, or to kill him. And since this policeman does not know how to distinguish between a democrat and a Communist, he is quite apt to beat, shoot and kill a democrat.

It is not easy to change the mentality of the people who become policemen in the Dominican Republic, especially with little time to do it. When the New Englanders burned women as witches, those who did the burning believed absolutely that they were destroying witches. Today, nobody believes that they were witches. But it is still like early Salem in Santo Domingo. When a Dominican policeman is told that he should persecute a young man because he is a Communist, the policeman believes with all his soul that his duty is to kill the youth.

The problem that my democratic gov-

ernment faced was to choose between the use of intelligence and the use of force, while the time passed during which the hot-headed youths and uneducated police learned to distinguish between democracy and Communism. And if someone says that in this period the Communists would be able to gain strength and take power, I say and guarantee that they could not do it. Only a dictatorship can give to the Communists the arguments they need for progress in the Dominican Republic; under a democratic regime the democratic conscience would outstrip the Communists.

TO return to the concepts of intelligence and force, I think that they apply to Communism itself in its fight for the conquest of power. No Communist party, in no country of the world, has been able to reach power solely because it was strong; it has needed, besides, a leader of exceptional capacity. The Dominican Communists have not had and do not have force, and they have not had and do not have a leader comparable to Lenin, Mao, Tito, or Fidel; and according to my prediction, they are not going to have either the force or the leader in the foreseeable future.

Dominican Communism is in its infancy, and began, as did Venezuelan Communism, with internal divisions that will require many years to overcome. Only the long dictatorship of Pérez Jiménez was able to create the right atmosphere for the different groups of Communists of the Venezuela of 1945 so that they could come together into a single party, and the lack of a leader of exceptional capacity has, in spite of the

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James Thomson Shotwell

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The author of the following guest editorial is vice president of the United Nations Association of the United States of America.*

IN THE COURSE of his ninety years, the man Shotwell wandered over many fields of human activity. He was a statesman who never held or wanted office. He had available a retreat in his academic profession. Many times have I heard him say, when frustrated by a visit to Washington—"of course, I can always go back to the Middle Ages."

If any of his many friends wanted to write a biography of this complex man, it would take limitless forms. The historians would claim him as one of their own. He was Bryce Professor of History at Columbia University. With a chuckle he remarked that his doctorate was on the history of the Papacy. His historical works covered numberless fields. One of his later interests was the meaning of history itself, and he wrote a book under the title, *The History of History*.

One of the vagaries of the man was that he was most anxious to be known as an economist. His greatest contribution to the Versailles Conference was in playing a leading part in the creation of the International Labor Organization. He was proud of its basic principle that world peace was dependent upon international, social, and economic justice. As Director of the Division of Economics and History of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, he was particularly proud of the economic recommendations of the Chatham House

Conference held in London in 1935. He had a practical bent, as shown by the fact that in one year he was on advisory committees of both the AFL and of the United States Chamber of Commerce.

However, many people would write Shotwell's biography in terms of his contribution to world peace. This covers four periods: the First World War; from the Senate's rejection of the Covenant to the Munich Agreement; the Second World War; and the world since then.

He was a member of the Inquiry established by President Wilson to prepare for the Versailles Conference. He went to Paris with our delegation.

SHOTWELL felt deeply the tragedy of the United States' rejection of the League of Nations. He tried to find moral and legal alternatives that would help. In 1928, out of a talk with Aristide Briand, grew the Pact of Paris, commonly known as the Briand-Kellogg Pact. Possibly the only person with whom Shotwell liked to be compared was Briand. They were of the same height and stocky build. Each had a heavy head of hair. Briand's mustache drooped more than Shotwell's. Despite quite different backgrounds, they shared a common insight into the stream of contemporary history.

For a few weeks, or for a month or so, Shotwell would retreat into the academic cloisters at Columbia University. Then suddenly one of his friends would hear the deep voice over the telephone saying, "I have a memorandum I want

you to read . . ." and then he was off again—to Washington, to London, to Paris, and more frequently to Geneva.

In 1939 he sensed that some catastrophic change would make possible either a revision of the League of Nations, or the creation of a new organization with American participation. In cooperation with a few others, as President of the League of Nations Association, he organized a research body entitled: "The Commission to Study the Organization of Peace." This body produced some bold ideas, which prompted John Foster Dulles to remark in 1949: "I can say in all sincerity that the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace made an indispensable contribution to the creation of the United Nations."

Shotwell was one of a committee of five, under Sumner Welles's chairmanship, which prepared the first rough working draft of the Charter.

The Department of State invited forty-two national organizations to name consultants to the United States Delegation at San Francisco. Shotwell was immediately elected their chairman. Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius said that the consultants played an important part in strengthening the Human Rights provisions of the Charter and in drafting Article 71, which provided for consultation between private organizations and the United Nations.

Probably no one at San Francisco knew that so soon after the Conference was adjourned the world would enter the atomic age. Shortly after the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan, Shotwell organized a committee of distinguished citizens to consider the military and peaceful implications of this awful discovery. In an address before the American Physical Society in January, 1946, he said: "Thus it was that the bursting of the atomic bomb brought thoughtful people everywhere face to face with the fact that this national system, which until now has been regarded as the supreme political creation of modern times, is wholly inadequate to deal with the universal fact which now confronts us."

In his last fifteen years of life Professor Shotwell felt a great compulsion to write on as many subjects as he could for posterity. He wanted to leave his memoirs for his family. Because of his humane sympathy and sense of justice his name could be found frequently among other courageous liberals protesting against what they felt was a violation of human rights.

And so his days gradually drew to a close. Three weeks before he died he remarked to a friend that his life was not too bad—he could still enjoy his madrigal recordings.

—CLARK M. EICHELBERGER.