

OPPOSITION TO FAMILY PLANNING IN LATIN AMERICA: CONSERVATIVE NATIONALISM

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Opposition to family planning among decision makers in Latin America stems primarily from three overlapping sources: the Church, the Marxists, and the Nationalists. Of these, only the Church presents institutionalized opposition and, in the light of the recent encyclical, its influence on public policy may prove to be of considerable significance. The Marxist forces are currently somewhat in disarray in Latin America, but offer the most challenging intellectual opposition to family planning programs. The third group, the Nationalists, are the subject of this paper. While some of them are Marxists, most of them are conservative, older generation, well educated traditionalists who, despite a frequent orthodox Catholicism, oppose family planning programs for deeply moral and nationalistic reasons, rather than out of doctrinaire religious or ideological considerations. We have selected the published work of three men to illustrate the nationalist way of thinking. The writers represent three important professions (law, medicine, and journalism), three countries (Peru, Colombia, and El Salvador), and three different but typical types of situations. In Peru, a nation just beginning to examine its population problem, we deal with reactions to its first population conference. In Colombia, a nation which has both articulated a broad policy and introduced a pilot program, we get reactions to concrete national efforts to deal with the population problem. In El Salvador, we deal with more diffuse reactions to what is viewed as a vast racist plot on the part of the white Western world.

PERU: FELIX CRUZAT ALEGRE

In December of 1965, for the first time in its history Peru held a national confer-

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ence on population. The fact that such a conference could be held at all in Peru was considered an achievement; and the conference papers, technical, antiseptic, dull, and non-controversial, confirmed the impression that this was only a very early step in Peru's coming to grips with its population problem. Indeed, President Fernando Belaunde Terry's reaction to the conference was to turn, perhaps in desperation, to the Incas "... I can only give homage" he said in his closing address, "to those who in remote times wanted to confront the population explosion to the point of evolving a system of government which by means of statistics and geographic study could assure every citizen his right to sustenance."¹

But if the papers were academic, the conference conclusions, which bore no apparent relation to them, were not. The second of fourteen conclusions stated that "the advantages of a larger population in Peru are only hypothetical."² So astonishing was this conclusion to one of the participants, that it prompted him to publish a monograph in 1968 entitled *Birth Control or Neo-Fascism?*

A Lima lawyer, Felix Cruzat Alegre states his wish in the book's prologue that the work have a "nationalist and especially humanist basis", currents which are not insignificant among Latin American intellectuals. His humanistic bent is evident from literary and religious allusions, the polemic style and the unscientific character of his observations on society. His nationalism, apart from an explicit ode to it in the concluding chapter, is evident from the incessant ex-coriation of the United States, of which the following is a pertinent example:

¹ Centro de Estudios de Poblacion y Desarrollo, I.—*Seminario Nacional de Poblacion y Desarrollo*, (Lima, 1966), p. xxxiii.

² *Ibid.*, p. 367.

"While the U.S. writes 'danger of cancer' on (its own) cigarettes, . . . in Peru where someone dies every eight hours of cancer, they conduct big campaigns to increase cigarette smoking. Could this be by any chance a means of population control?"

While he never answers this challenging question, he does answer a number of others, his basic thesis is introduced by means of a challenging assertion—that to speak of "population control the developing nations, virtually depopulated and with immense riches in their soils, sub-soils, seas, rivers, lakes, etc. is absurd at best, since their poverty is not caused by overpopulation, because this does not exist, but by archaic socio-economic structures."⁴ Everything stems from this basic premise—the obvious absurdity of Peru's having a population problem. As many of his fellow Latin American intellectuals, not all of them humanists, he defines population problems exclusively in terms of national population density, and equates potentially exploitable natural resources with current wealth. Peru's strikingly low population densities and strikingly large abundance of potentially exploitable natural resources would compel any thinking man to wonder why the "nations interested in imposing population control in the under-developed nations and not in their own, are the super-populated and super-industrialized Europeans, at the head of which is the United States."⁵ Obviously such nations are not so foolish as to have failed to observe the same low population density in Latin America as the author has observed. Their advocacy of population control therefore, must be concealing "*Hidden Interest*," as Cruzat entitles his second chapter. What would these be?

Essentially there are two. The first is the North American desire to keep the

³ Feliz V. Cruzat Alegre, *Control de la Natalidad o Neo-Fascismo?* (Lima: Talleres Gráficos, 1967), p. 40.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

underdeveloped countries weak and underdeveloped. Population control accomplishes this by several direct and indirect means. In blasting the conclusions of the 1965 Peruvian conference ("sponsored and financed by the Ford Foundation") Cruzat tells us that population growth and social change are virtually equivalents: "There is not the slightest doubt that these gentlemen want to assure that Peru will never have structural changes, and that everything remains *static and stationary* while other countries *grow and progress*"⁶ (italics added). "The Americans know" that population growth could create both internal markets and a new outlook threatening the imperialists: "The Americans know that in 20 or 30 years they will have 400-500 million living in 7.8 million square kilometers and that Iberoamerica with 23 million square kilometers . . . and 200 million people could grow to match it in population, which would cause the yankis the loss of raw material deposits and markets . . . as well as cheap labor, because . . . by then Latin America would have awakened."⁷

Ultimately, the plan calls for a once vigorous and youthful nation enfeebled by senescence and sterility: "Finally, the desired objective would be achieved, millions of sterilized women, . . . an absence of young people and a population of old people who could not promote the nation's development, and, naturally, the stagnation or retrogression of Peru."⁸

But this is only the first part of an ingenious plot. The striking feature of Cruzat's theory is its reliance on population density not only for Latin America but for the industrialized societies. Since he sees the former as under-populated and the latter as over-populated, he draws the ultimate conclusion: "In the light of this situation (of population stagnation in Peru) there would be no alternative to importing people from the over-populated

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

countries, which is precisely what they are after. . . ."⁹

COLOMBIA: HERMAN VERGARA

The most sophisticated of our three nationalists, Dr. Herman Vergara, is a Psychiatrist and Professor of Psychology in Colombia. Although his reading in the area of family planning has been confined to local sources and to the 1965-66 Hearings of Senator Gruening's Sub-Committee on foreign aid, he is far better informed than either of our other examples. This is because Colombia has produced more literature on family planning than any other Latin American nation, because the Gruening Hearings in fact contained a great deal of expert testimony, and because Dr. Vergara reads with great care.

In the introduction to a 1968 monograph entitled, *The Layo Complex: Antecedents and Questions Concerning Demographic Policy*,¹⁰ he denies having a pro-nationalist bias, disclaims interest in particular contraceptives (which he leaves to the Church to decide) and states his purpose as "defending authentic and honest information so that married couples rather than the State or its lackeys can determine the responsibility of each family." Indeed, almost immediately he contrasts Margaret Sanger favorably with Malthus and with the Ford and Rockefeller foundations (because of the former's concern for family welfare rather than national economic welfare), and expresses concern over society's rapid transition from prohibition of contraception not only to tolerance of it but "for the first time in the history of western civilization . . . to State contraceptive policy."

Noting the United States government's interest in giving aid for population control, he raises a pair of questions often heard in Latin America: "What moved President Johnson to take this step, and why is Latin America its prin-

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁰ Herman Vergara, *El Complejo de Layo* (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1968).

cipal object?"¹¹ A partial answer is not long in coming: "The U.S. has sent to our countries its contraceptive brigades for the same reason that imperial Rome sent its legions into those nations in its sphere of influence . . . at the request of certain leaders of these nations."¹² Vergara thus identifies his dual fears of contraceptive coercion from without and contraceptive coercion from within the nation. Ex-President Lleras Camargo, because of his testimony to the Gruening Committee and his statements to the Pan-American Assembly, is established as the principal "quisling",¹³ with Dr. Hernan Mendoza and the Colombian Association of Medical Schools identified as the detailed architects of treachery.

The willingness of the distinguished nationalists to be used in such a manner is never entirely explained, though the alleged anti-Catholicism of certain liberal party members, and the "true necessity in these countries . . . to earn dollars" provide part of the answer. His principal explicit charge against the national groups is deception—they claim to be scientific when they are political, they claim to be local when they are in essence foreign, they claim to be educational when they are service organizations, and they claim to be working with the Church when they are anti-clerical. The first two points merit further elaboration.

An interesting and crucial aspect of Vergara's argument concerns the role of scientific research. He maintains that the population problem "has not originated in studies done in Colombia" and that it "is not a problem discovered by men of science."¹⁴ These assertions are especially striking in the light of the fact that the Colombian movement has from its inception been sponsored by the Co-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹³ Frequent citations from J. M. Stykos ("a northamerican personality as involved as anyone could be in the strategy of this assault on a continent") are used to verify the key nature of Lleras' role.

¹⁴ Vergara, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

Colombian Association of Medical Schools, an organization which has insisted on its almost exclusive interest in research and education on family planning.¹⁵ Vergara argues that the Association has consistently mis-used science for its own ends. He claims that the names of such disciplines as demography and sociology are used to account for actions "which have their true origin in political considerations." Whereas the family planners have argued that demographic data prove the need for population control, Vergara argues that the demographic statistics are so poor that they cannot prove anything. He speaks of "doctors turned (*habillados*) demographers; and cites Lleras Camargo "the trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation" as suggesting the establishment of Colombian demographic centers "to apply to our own national circumstances . . . such information as we are receiving from private agencies all over the world and especially from the U.S."¹⁶

When Dr. Mendoza states that it has been established as a fact family planning prevents abortions, Vergara charges that he has been subject to biased foreign literature "with no adherence to the requirements of a truly scientific literature,"¹⁷ and cites his own foreign authorities (taken from the Gruening Hearing) to demonstrate the contrary. He names and indicts the foreign advisers used by the Association, and in a special appendix exposes their use of psychological principles to manipulate public opinion.

This brings us to one of his most basic fears—that the philosophy, motivation and strategy for the movement is essentially *alien*. Borrowing a phrase from Lleras Camargo describing Colombia as a nation "racially mixed and tropical," he

says that "the least that could be required for a demographic policy would be that it be structured by experts who are racially mixed, tropical, and accustomed to the Catholic environment."¹⁸ Instead, he finds "quislings" structuring it. The explanation for this peculiar kind of imperialism is worthy of a psychiatrist: it is the product of a conflict between North America's "great passion for democracy" and "the felt need for the white, non-Catholic privileged sectors of the highly developed temperate zone to slow down—or end, who knows—the procreation of racially mixed, tropical and Catholic Latin Americans."¹⁹ This conflict is resolved by what Vergara terms "the etiquette of democracy, the invasion of the Latin American continent at the request of the most outstanding spokesman of Latin America."²⁰

Underlying the anger and the revulsion at the deception and treachery of one's compatriots who sell out to the enemy, perhaps lies the greatest fear of all—the fear of extinction by a clever and powerful foe. Perhaps this is the meaning of the book's title, which refers to a treacherous and lecherous Greek who tried to murder his child, but who was fated to die by the die by the hand of that very son.

EL SALVADOR: ALTAMIRANO REVISITED

The years have dulled the sharpness of neither pencil nor tongue of Latin America's most articulate pro-natalist, Napoleon Viera Altamirano. In our earlier exegesis of his editorials appearing in *El Salvador's Diario de Hoy* between 1962 and 1964, we described his mystique concerning Latin America's population growth, and his charges of racial genocide levelled against North American family planners.²¹

¹⁵ That there is some substance to this claim is indicated by the Association's recent publication of two large volumes of original research, a productivity record much larger than any comparable organization in the Western hemisphere.

¹⁶ Vergara, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

²¹ See "Latin American Intellectuals and the Population Problem" in J. M. Stycos, *Human Fertility in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968). While most of the editorials cited here are unsigned, we have, for reasons of

Since these editorials of the early 60's when a fight against birth control in Latin America could only be described as quixotic, much has happened. The U.S. and various international agencies have declared themselves in favor of family planning technical assistance; governments, even in Central America, have instituted family planning programs; and well financed private programs have emerged in virtually every Latin American nation, including an especially vigorous one in El Salvador. In response, Altamirano has not slowed down the velocity of his fire. In a 33 month period beginning in mid-1965, no less than 51 of his editorials on population have come to our attention. Scarcely a month goes by without at least one editorial, and in several months there have been one or more per week.

The substance of these editorials has changed in only subtle ways. Slightly shaken (it provoked 3 consecutive editorials) by Lleras Camargo's flat advocacy of birth control in mid-1965, he reminded Colombia's ex-president that the Continent could easily host two or three billion inhabitants, and warned him that even serious problems would not warrant "converting the American mother's womb into a slaughter-house or latrine."²²

Altamirano's identification of population growth and nationalism continues to be a dominant theme. A heady mix of Juan Bautista Alberdi's demographic slogan with one of Altamirano's favorite biological metaphors produces the following: "To populate continues meaning to civilize, the only difference being that (in this Century) the population still needed to civilize America should emerge vigorous and pulsating from the womb of (Latin) American mothers."²³ So vital a population growth that its antonym

style and their editorial position, attributed them to Altamirano. All references refer to *El Diario de Hoy* whose circulation is 56,000 daily and 80,000 on Sunday.

²² *Tambien Lleras Camargo cbtra la madre y el nino*, August 9, 10, 1965.

(birth control) is death's synonym: "When we achieve the demographic density of the great European powers, we shall see if the threat of poverty allows no alternative to suicide."²⁴

Little wonder that Altamirano can refer to Lleras' position as one of "extreme pessimism" when his own approaches ethereal optimism:

The sea is yielding herself to us like a virgin land that once offered herself as a path to unknown territories and fabulous resources. Technology makes the every inch of land a source of riches. Where a tree cannot grow, something else is produced for man. The craggy mountain peak becomes a site to store the water or snow which produces the electricity which in the hands of man will make bread fall from heaven . . . yielding sustenance for all.²⁵

Five years ago such optimism was typical of the Latin American intellectual and even, to a lesser extent, of the international agencies. In the past few years, however, Altamirano has had to deal with a growing number of agencies such as "the FAO, the UNICEF, and even the UNESCO and the OAS, entering the movement under the supreme command of the U.N., spreading the crass error that our population growth is falling behind the increase in food production."²⁶ His charges against the international organizations soon became more specific, and the new year of 1967 was ushered in with an editorial entitled "Both UNESCO and the FAO in the Racist Plot." It should not be thought, however, that the plot is restricted to the European and North American organizations typically the target of Altamirano's ire. In condemning demography as a new profession created "to manipulate statis-

²³ *La Campana mundial a favor de la natalidad*, September 23, 1965.

²⁴ *Asamblea adversa control de natalidad*, November 15, 1965.

²⁵ *La explosion demografica y la conspiracion racista*, January 13, 1966.

²⁶ *La compania racista del control de la natalidad*, February 23, 1966.

tics to prove that the whirlpool of population growth requires birth control" he jabs quickly at the Economic Commission of Latin America (ECLA).²⁷ In other editorials he adds the Inter-American American Committee on the Alliance for Progress (CIAP),²⁸ the Pan American Health Organization, and the Latin American Center of Demography (CELADE), which he terms a "genocidal Center."²⁹

Indeed, there are few institutions or classes of people which are exempt from attack. In one editorial he attacks "leader classes, academicians, thinkers and statesmen";³⁰ and when one hundred Nobel Prize winners called attention to the population problem, the scientists were likened to "monstrous mathematical animals . . . the same scientists who gave us the dreadful arms for nuclear war."³¹

Even the Church cannot remain entirely without suspicion. In a critical editorial devoted to the September 1965 statement of Cardinal Suenens, Altamirano warns darkly that "today there are ideological currents deliberately aimed at destroying the spiritual power of the Church."³² Soon he is hinting more darkly still at infiltration: "The great fallacious and deceiving argument that demographic growth lags behind economic growth has already been accepted by the Alliance for Progress and some sectors of the Church, as desired by the non-Catholic racists."³³ In disparaging the argument that slowing population growth

will improve income distributions, he contemptuously attributes it to "CEPAL, Moscow, Washington, Rome, Peking, and Havana"³⁴ (Italics added). The changes in the Church are so incomprehensible they can only be attributed to evil forces. He admits he witnessed "with stupification" how a South American Cardinal during the last ecumenical council "referred with disrespect and blasphemy to the dogma of the Virgin Mary"; and announces forthrightly the source of "the enemies without and the traitors within": it is no less than a communist conspiracy. ". . . the Marxist circles, assured that the Church would fall, little by little, into their hands, . . . tried to carry the socialist ideology to the encyclicals, pressuring for all possible agrarian reforms . . . their conspiracy against clerical celibacy. . . . In Colombia Camilo Torres soon appeared . . . then to join the criminal communist gangs."³⁵

The reader may have noted a not infrequent reference to a "racist plot," a plot which lies at the heart of Altamirano's crusade, "a vast racist communist and imperialistic conspiracy . . . to socialize, depopulate and de-Catholicize us." The latter phrase is frequently used in the editorials and provides a useful point of departure for explication of his position. Let us consider each of its three terms.

Socialism.—The Marxist infiltration of the Church is one small piece of a much grander design. Altamirano sees a "multi-continental, world-wide" effort to "take-over." He sees the U.N. "plagued with agents of international leftism,"³⁶ and the FAO "falling into the hands of activists of the socialist left."³⁷ Naturally hemispheric institutions have been included. The Alliance for Progress, he feels, has felt

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Piden supresion de leyes contra el aborto*, September 11, 1967.

²⁹ *Como la UNESCO, tambien la FAO en el complot racista*, June 16, 1967.

³⁰ *La FAO al servicio de la conspiracion racista*, April 11, 1967.

³¹ *La compaña mundial a favor de la natalidad*, September 17, 1965.

³² *Tambien nos será impuesto el control de natalidad*, February 11, 1968.

³³ *Reunion en Puerto España para activar el control de la natalidad*, November 11, 1967.

³⁴ *El seminario anti-christiano en Tegucigalpa*, June 13, 1966.

³⁵ *Cien bárbaros Nobel ante su Santidad*, July 16, 1965.

³⁶ *El daltonismo axiologico del Cardinal Suenens*, October 12, 1965.

³⁷ *Las falacias economicas de la racistas*, September 9, 1967.

the "lethal leftist influence" from its inception, and has been moving farther and farther toward destroying freedom in Latin America.³⁸ The Economic Commission for Latin America is clearly under the influence of socialist economists.

Depopulation.—The effort to depopulate Latin America is a part of the socialist conspiracy. The link is on occasion explicitly established.

Not only was it necessary to check demographic growth by birth control, but structural reforms were imposed in order to guarantee a "better distribution of wealth" making possible a true "social justice." In other words the constructive work which the FAO could do was converted into a socialist and Malthusian promotion.³⁹

or again:

... the leftists not only are trying to check our social development, socializing and regimenting us prematurely, but also holding back our population growth.⁴⁰

At the same time, however, and sometimes in the same editorial, Altamirano can attribute the plot or its financing to "industrial interests of a certain medical kind."⁴¹ Equally unusual for a socialist plot is its success "thanks to the resources made available as much by the U.S. government as by the contraceptive firms,"⁴² or to financing "by racists from the United States and Nordic Europe."⁴³

At any rate, there is no doubt that the United States is directly implicated, though it is not singled out for attack as often as in earlier years. Outside of its financial backing, it is usually grouped with other Nordics, Europeans, or "many

³⁸ *La compana racista del control de la natalidad*, February 23, 1966.

³⁹ *El pretexto del hambre en la conspiracion racista*, April 14, 1967.

⁴⁰ *¿Contra el hambre o contra el hombre?*, March 28, 1965.

⁴¹ *Reunion en Puerto España*, November 11, 1967.

⁴² *Gobierno adversa control de natalidad*, December 2, 1967.

⁴³ *Genocidio malthusiano de mujeres en Brasil*, July 13, 1967.

people" who feel that there are too many "negros, indians, mulattos, and mestizos," and are attempting to prevent "the Central-American man from taking firm possession of his land."⁴⁴

Decatholization and the Fertility Mystique.—If the Latin "man" is the ultimate target of this foreign attack, the Latin woman is the medium. Altamirano's view of woman is in the tradition of conservative Catholicism notable in the recent encyclical of Pope Paul. He refers to "the blessed womb of the Central American woman" from which "millions more beings will come to fill the cities."⁴⁵ To stop such prolificity would be to stop nature, so that birth control assumes "proportions of genocide in the very maternal cloister of our America."⁴⁶ In attacking those who would substitute birth control for abortion, he shows his revulsion for sins of the flesh. "Why should the poor woman have to be taught to sin without conceiving."⁴⁷ The sexual freedom it might bring the woman would be intolerable, as "The mother becomes sterile at will."⁴⁸ He sees the "American woman—colored, mestizo, indian, mulatto, etc." being used in Brazil as "guinea pigs to try out the best methods to check the growth of these peoples",⁴⁹ and 40,000 Colombian women "submitting for over two years, to a process of sterilization with chemical contraceptives . . . financed by North American firms and possibly with approval of Alliance functionaries."⁵⁰ The fertility mystique and fears of socialism blend nicely in his phrase "regimenta-

⁴⁴ *Gobierno adversa control de natalidad*, December 2, 1965.

⁴⁵ *La santa misión de unir pueblos*, September 15, 1966.

⁴⁶ *Genocidio malthusiano de mujeres en Brasil*, July 13, 1967.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Cien bárbaros Nobel ente su Santidad*, July 16, 1965.

⁴⁹ *Genocidio malthusiano de mujeres en Brasil*, July 13, 1967.

⁵⁰ *Esterilizan a 40 mil mujeres Colombianas*, February 21, 1967.

tion of the womb." His concern over depopulation and his fertility mystique are also blended in the affirmation "a people's will to grow is as authentic as its wish to live, because it is the will to power, a will stemming from the very wellspring of life."⁵¹

Increasingly, one gets the impression that Altamirano is beleaguered by the growing shift of public opinion away from his 19th Century view of capitalism, catholicism, and motherhood. "Not a single month passes" he complained recently, "without a conference being held in some South or Central American capital, which under the pretext of christianizing the family, poses the population problem";⁵² and as early as 1965 he noted that "Hardly a week passes without some newspaper, magazine, radio or T.V. program inundating us with alarmist messages on the danger of population growth."⁵³

Are there any signs of change? Perhaps the tiniest of cracks appear in two editorials. In one, he admits that "if the present rate of increase in the underdeveloped countries continues, humanity would be approaching the limits of subsistence," but goes on to say the present problem is *depopulation*.⁵⁴ More recently he even admits the right of parents to choose their own kind of family, (even one composed of children "deformed by thalidomide"), and of the State to decide "if the nation should cease to grow or even decline;" but of course goes on to say the opposite course would be both appropriate and noble.⁵⁵

On the whole, however, the major changes seem to be increasing defensive-

⁵¹ *El deber de poblar y el derecho de dejar nacer*, February 11, 1968.

⁵² *Para el año dos mil todos viveremos en las ciudades*, September 12, 1967.

⁵³ *Gobierno adversa control de natalidad*, December 2, 1965.

⁵⁴ *La campana racista del control de la natalidad*, February 23, 1966.

⁵⁵ *El deber de poblar y el derecho de dejar nacer*, February 11, 1968.

ness and a toning down of the earlier lusty accusations of national castration and womb defiling. More accurately, the changes have been less with Altamirano than with the world around him, leaving the sound of his voice increasingly hollow. Although the modern world may in fact be engulfing Altamirano, one sees the philosophy of this would-be superego of Latin America sinking slowly into the culture's collective unconscious—becoming a part of age-old repressed horrors bits of which occasionally appear in dreams.

CONCLUSIONS

The significance of the nationalist psyche has been much enhanced by the recent Papal encyclical, and what might have been dying embers may now be rekindled. Lest the reader conclude that the "case histories" presented here are anomalous anachronisms, let us draw a few illustrations from one country, Peru, from sources which it would be difficult to dismiss. Should we hear echoes from the lips of Peruvian leaders of the nationalist strivings to enrich the nation with people, or hear echoes of the nationalist fears of demographic imperialism, the significance of the three writers discussed above may become more clear.

In March of 1968, APRISTA party leader Victor Haya de la Torre declared that "what Peru had plenty of was land and that if the problems of making it productive were gigantic 'we should generate and grow a race of giants to conquer Peruvian geography,' rather than than propose population control, a problem which affects [only] Asia and overpopulated Europe."⁵⁶ The party's intellectual leader University Rector Luis Alberto Sanchez has on several occasions made such statements as "Individuals most interested in birth control are the large landowners and proprietors, and the most backward capitalists. They see a threat to their profits in population

⁵⁶ *La Cronica*, Lima, March 18, 1968.

growth. . . ."⁵⁷ Such opinions are not the exclusive province of the APRISTAS. Immediately following the Papal Encyclical, Peru's Minister of Health Javier Arias Estella hastened to state that "birth control was not justified in Peru given its [low] density . . . on the contrary a larger population was necessary to exploit the nation's great riches."⁵⁸ Even before the encyclical the Peruvian bishops had condemned "foreign pressures [for family planning] . . . wounding personal dignity and national sovereignty,"⁵⁹ a declaration *El Comercio* applauded as a "moral and patriotic declaration, constituting a call for the defense of sovereignty."⁶⁰ The influential newspaper also noted that Peru's economic development went hand in hand with population increase, that England and Belgium would fit perfectly within the territory of Peru, and that there was no room for birth for birth control when

⁵⁷ L. A. Sanchez, "Urban Growth and the Latin American Heritage," in ed. G. H. Beyer, *The Urban Explosion in Latin America*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 2.

⁵⁸ *El Universo*, Guayaquil, August 3, 1968.

⁵⁹ *El Comercio*, February 3, 1968.

⁶⁰ *El Comercio*, February 4, 1968.

over-population was not the basic Peruvian problem."⁶¹

In short, while we do not pretend that Cruzat Alegre, Vergara, or Altamirano have a large following or even a large readership, we believe that they mirror, in varying degrees, the intellectual climate in which they live. It would be well for North Americans to listen carefully to such voices, for they are the less inhibited and more articulate (if somewhat exaggerated) voices of a large share of Latin America's intellectuals. Beneath what appears to be an illogical argument about population density and an irrational fear of international genocide lie the deeper and perhaps more justified sentiments of national pride and resentment over a melancholy history of relations with powerful nations. It will not be easy to treat the symptoms of this malaise while leaving its roots untouched. In the meantime, North Americans should bear in mind that a nation's deepest and most justifiable urgings are to live, prosper, and fulfill its destiny; and to be respected, perhaps even loved, by its neighbors.

⁶¹ Reported in *Presencia*, La Paz, September 1, 1968.