

# HISTORY MAKING MEETING

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The Second International Congress of Latin American Christian Democracy (which in fact was the Fourth when one takes into consideration the two Montevideo Conferences of 1947 and 1949) held in Sao Paulo last September, marks a new era in the life of World Christian Democracy. It was organized according to suggestions approved by the First International Conference of Christian Democracy, which took place in Paris in November, 1956.

The main idea of the Sao Paulo conference was to bring together the principal leaders of all Christian Democratic Internationals. Present at the Congress, in addition to the outstanding Latin American Christian Democrats, were Mr. A. de Schryver (Belgian Member of Parliament and Minister of State and President of Nouvelles Equipes Internationales (West European Union of Christian Democrats), Mr. Alfred Coste Floret (Member of the French Parliament and Secretary General of NEI and Mr. Mariano Rumor (Deputy Secretary General of Italian Democrazia Cristiana, Member of Parliament, and Member of the Executive Committee of NEI). Also in attendance was a team of the leaders of CDUCE: Mr. A. Prochazka, its Chairman, Mr. M. Krek and Mr. Trimakas, its Vice-Chairmen, Mr. L. Varga, one of the leaders of Hungarian Christian Democracy, and several other persons. This provided a possibility for a close review of political problems calling for Christian Democratic activity in all three areas of its operation or interest.

The representatives of the three Central European countries on which the attention of the world is focused, namely Poland (the author), Hungary (Mr. Varga) and Yugoslavia (Mr. Krek), gave their evaluation of the situation prevailing in their respective countries.

Following a review of the world situation, a declaration of the solidarity of World Christian Democracy was issued and signed by the Chairmen and Secretaries General of the three internationals. This declaration proclaims the necessity of the integration of entire continents, thus making the integration of Europe a political aim of European, Western and Central European Christian Democracy.

Another event, which took place on the invitation of the Sao Paulo Congress, was a meeting of the four Secretaries General of Christian Democracy. The participants were: Mr. Coste Floret — NEI, Sr. Tomas Reyes Vicuna — CDOA, the author — CDUCE, and Stanislaw Gebhardt, representing the European Young Christian Democrats. The meeting was devoted to the coordination of the activities of the four international organizations — especially in the field of information.

As far as the Congress itself is concerned, it proved to be an enormous success. Latin American Christian Democrats attended with much more self-confidence than before. They came after electoral victories in Peru, Chile and Argentina. These victories demonstrated clearly that Christian Democracy is no longer in a beginning stage, but is already well vested among Latin Americans.

The participants of the Congress not only condemned Communism, but dictatorial regimes of the right as well as the left, and any kind of exploitation of labor. They did not limit themselves to the negation of what they dislike, nor did they devote their time to philosophical deliberations on abstractions, as Christian Democrats often do. On the contrary, they worked on constructive and concrete plans of action. The Congress, therefore, was in fact a staff meeting, drawing the strategy of further endeavors on national and international levels, and preparing new political victories of the member-parties. After establishing a series of necessary steps to be taken by all member-parties on economic, social and educational matters, the Congress concentrated its work on its main theme — which, in the opinion of its participants, will remedy the most important shortcomings in the life of the continent, namely on American integration. In this field, three main lines of proposed activity emerged:

- 1) A plan for gradual changing of "national markets" into "regional markets" has been elaborated.

- 2) The solidarity of the Latin American area with the United States was proclaimed, and a mutual, close cooperation for the benefit of the Americas was anticipated.

- 3) A project for the formation of an American parliamentary union was prepared. It clearly states that only those countries can participate in which parliaments are freely elected by the people — thus eliminating the threat of subversive activities by phony parliamentarians — the threat which still endangers European parliamentary union.

All these proposals have another important aspect: They make the concrete program of Latin American Christian Democracy a common plan of all member-parties, thus uniting them not only by the same ideology but also by the same plan of action.

The next Latin American Congress is to take place in 1959, in Lima, Peru. We have, then, two years to observe the creative results of the Sao Paulo Congress. We believe that these two years will be marked by successive electoral victories of Christian Democratic parties in many Latin American countries. In this spirit the participants ended the Congress.

Konrad Siemewicz