

# CEPAL Review

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but is deeply-rooted in personal and as a rule painful experiences. Suffice it to cite two of these: the collapse of the Weimar Republic, and, the most personal of all, the Spanish Civil War.

Nevertheless, it is typical of Don José that he should have constantly linked those experiences and that concern for Spain and Europe with an endeavour, of decisive importance for many of us, to probe the destiny of this Latin American continent.

Preoccupation with Europe, preoccupation with Spain and preoccupation with Latin America, in which heartfelt concern for their destinies is combined with the intellectual rigour proper to a zealous effort to understand.

Forgive me if I indulge in a personal reminiscence: a good many years ago, when I decided to devote myself to this thing we call sociology, Don José gave me a direct warning: "You seem to want to try your luck in hell; go ahead and do it, but with your eyes open!"

The note of concern so often perceptible in what he wrote never prevented him from keeping his eyes open, and that is why he could always discover in the most thorny and difficult problem a seed of hope.

His latest writings on the future of democracy, upon which we are commenting here are almost all marked by this tone.

Another decisive and invariable feature was his acute feeling for history. The themes which Don José propounded, and which have been followed up by many—not to say almost all—of us in this continent, were approached from that standpoint. It is from him that we have taken the idea of the independent historical origins of democracy.

In his own words, "No essential relation links the development and historical consolidation of the modern constitutional State and its subsequent democratic structure with the specific conceptions of the capitalist system, and consequently neither the rule of law nor the institutional crystallization of the egalitarian aspirations of democracy has been formulated or defined as a function of what we now call economic development. Guarantees of the public and private rights of the individual date farther back than concern for the growth of the economic system".

And a little farther on: "The history of Europe is a clear case in point, since poverty was no bar either to the ardent desire for democracy or to the gradual improvement of the footing on which it was established".

Later, to lay forceful emphasis on these points, he says: "Neither the rule of law nor the concept of democracy can be reduced to the status of mere instruments; and while the times we live in do not, perhaps, permit a return to the original justification of these two institutions, it would at least seem necessary to make full use of all that still remains alive in these beliefs in consonance with the various national credos ... and initiate a renewal of a political 'will' open to the anguished protest of needless frustrations. That is to say, a 'will' which really 'wants' to transcend instrumen-

tal rationalism and once again found the legitimacy of democratic rule on the supreme values of a form of human society which has a real significance for man and his community".

But we also want to take up one of his constant questions: which is the group or social class capable of laying such a task upon itself and upon others?

And to his encouragement and intellectual support we owe what is the aim of some of us today: to rediscover in the history of popular movements in our countries the social prop of democracy.

For if democracy has been stigmatized as unilateral and spurious, the intention of popular movements consists precisely in ridding it of this unilateral and spurious character. But this means that the aspiration to true democracy must be preserved and must pervade all action.

It is part of the history of Latin America that the popular sectors have sought to introduce a form of democratic social comity, while at the same time endeavouring to discover the meaning of democracy in their own existence.

It is through their action and behaviour that the popular sectors have given full expression to the *meaning* of democracy, and, in broader terms, to the meaning of the history of our countries. Which presupposes their existence as figures in that history, not as mere masses.

If we are to envisage, as is urgently necessary today, a democratic option which will accord the popular sectors active and increasing participation, history must be reconsidered from the standpoint of the people. It must be re-interpreted in such terms that the popular sectors are not reduced to objects, but exalted to subjects, of history.

Don José himself spoke of the "supreme meaning of politics and the decisive value of the human element in shaping a lasting social order" such as "is the real goal of futurological studies, which give it pride of place over the prognostication—in the last analysis 'reactionary'—of man's possibilities of technological achievement and purely material satisfaction, his income and resources, on earth. Any civilization which is dominated by concern only with these is indeed doomed beyond hope".

#### *Address by Raúl Prebisch\**

There can be no doubt that Medina's ideas sank deep into many of us, influencing us subtly, almost like something in the air we breathe. The respect commanded by his vast erudition and intellectual honesty was extended to his ideas, which were always worthy of special consideration. Yet, on the other hand, they have not penetrated our patterns of thinking to such an extent

\*Read by Enrique V. Iglesias.

and in such great depth as they deserve. What is more, I am sure that a number of us in this institution would be staggered if we were asked to sum up in a few words Don José's thinking on any of the basic questions with which he was concerned. There are many reasons for this, but I should like to draw attention to two of them.

In the first place, Don José, who was the very opposite of an imposing personality, offered the product of his intellectual effort with the most unassuming modesty and sought no platform or forum from which to disseminate it. One might say that his writings gained fame in his own despite, since he disliked not only praise but even personal references.

Secondly, let us frankly admit that many of his essays were not and are not easy reading for those who have no specialized training in philosophy and sociology. His conception of the labour of the mind compelled him to investigate, present and critically analyse in his writings all opinions relevant to the topic with which he was dealing, and this makes understanding of his work very difficult for the uninitiated reader or for one who lacks the resolution to follow Don José over all the rough terrain into which his intellectual curiosity led him.

In any event, whatever the cause of the obstacles to the dissemination of Medina's ideas, what is certain is that we must return to his writings to extract from them the riches they can give us. The task is not easy, but the reward will be generous. It is a task that is being performed, at my suggestion, by Adolfo Gurrieri, who has gone deeply into the thinking of our admired mentor. I hope that this indispensable collaboration of Gurrieri's may appear in the eighth issue of the *Review*.

Among the many topics which Medina explored while he was working with CEPAL there are some that are specially deserving of this rediscovery.

In the first place, we must carefully re-read those early CEPAL texts in which he diligently sought to lay the foundations of the sociology of economic development, or, more generically, of an integrated conception of development. He did so under the pressure of time—or of the 'irritating impatience' of the economists, as he wrote somewhere—but his efforts yielded fruits which must not be thrown away. I myself have reached the conviction that we cannot be satisfied with an economic theory of development, and that it must be at least sociological and political as well.

Furthermore, we must revert to the generic question of the relation between economic development and democracy. A review of Medina's writings will show that he—like many of us—was guided at first by great confidence in the possibility of attaining economic development through the classical liberal formulas—what he calls the 'Weberian paradigm'—, only to lean increasingly later on towards the conviction that this paradigm had been invalidated by the real facts of peripheral development, and that new formulae should be adopted in keeping with that reality, with Latin America's potentialities and aspirations.

Similarly, he never believed that democracy was a by-product of economic development, and still less that it was easy to achieve. On the contrary, conscious of its practical difficulties, he carefully analysed all the facets of its crisis. But neither did he ever lose hope, and even in his last writings he continued to contemplate the possibility of putting into practice a planned development in which the representative mechanisms would be the forums in which opinions are analysed and decisions adopted. In his own words, he would have liked to see tried out in Latin America a parliamentary political régime which at the same time would be the efficacious organ of democratic economic planning.

This political hope which Medina cherished is in my opinion impossible to fulfill without a profound social and economic transformation of our peripheral capitalism; but that is a topic which is obsessing my thoughts, and on which I feel the need for a sustained dialogue. The dialogue I hoped to have with Don José. I can never have it now; but his writings remain, the mirror in which we can still see his profound and lively intelligence reflected.

*Address by Enrique V. Iglesias*

In bringing this commemorative meeting to a close, I am setting the seal on the desire of those many here present to pay Don José the tribute he deserves, as one of the major and most significant figures, in terms of intellectual value, that have passed through this institution and through Latin America. I am sure that the present ceremony would have awakened in Don José a silent protest, because it would be doing violence to one of his most attractive features, his boundless modesty, which, as Raúl Prebisch has just said, was apparent to all and which everyone found touching. The friends, disciples and colleagues who have spoken today have described Don José's intellectual influence; but I should say they have given us only a glimpse of it. It underlay ideas of great importance in this institution, constituting a new and revitalized force in CEPAL's thinking, which helped to create sensitiveness to social problems, and was a guiding light to many in this Commission, so that our presence in Latin America came to be of something more than merely economic significance, and the question of development was invested with all its profound human and social connotations.

As has been rightly observed by those who have preceded me this evening, much remains to be sought out and explored in Don José's thinking, if it is to be properly known and disseminated. Its significance will never be sufficiently evaluated on an occasion like this; it will have to be left for study, analysis, publication, and discussion at other meetings where we will continue to look more deeply into the legacy he has left us.

I should merely like to recall one or two of his personal traits which made a profound impression on me. A couple of years ago he came back from Spain, telling me that his home was where his friends were,