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Third Session

Montevideo, Uruguay

SPEECH MADE BY SEÑOR LUIS BATLLE BERRES,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY AT  
THE CLOSING MEETING OF THE THIRD SESSION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION  
FOR LATIN AMERICA

Once again our country has had the honour of being the seat of another international conference of one of the many highly reputed organizations which constitute the United Nations. At the end of its session, we have once again the satisfaction of announcing the success of the work carried out, which enables us to hope that this international organization will continue to make new progress every day. We can hope too that this new international world will strike deep and strong roots into the hearts of people. We have watched this success with sincere satisfaction because we believe that only through this unity of peoples and of work will it be possible to reconcile the interests of all and to attain a better form of community, through which to establish the kingdom of peace and the happiness of mankind.

I do not know if it is because we are a small country or because we have a sense of politics but it is in these international organizations that we have always sought the solution of all the troubles which beset the peoples of the world. In 1907 the Uruguayan delegation, headed by José Batlle

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/y Ordoñez

y Ordoñez, demanded in the Hague Conference the unity of all the peoples of America, in order to guarantee and strengthen peace. We are continuing that tradition today in our loyal efforts to contribute to the best of our ability to the work of the United Nations; thus we follow with concern the difficult and sometimes slow progress of this new and great international organization.

We are passing through a far-reaching world revolution and we should not be very intelligent if we believed that we could check this collective disturbance of all the continents by violent means; rather should we seek urgently, faced with the force of facts, to control the violence of this current of men's minds, which is sweeping aside all the institutions, régimes and customs, and to find new streams which will bring mankind the serenity they must have to live in peace and the benefits brought to society by progress.

We are all agreed that America must demand the liberation of its immense natural wealth, in order that it may benefit millions living in a reasonless and dangerous misery. ECLA has approved carefully studied resolutions concerning this problem and it is satisfactory to discover in all the reports produced efficient work and concern to achieve solutions. I will take the liberty to say, however, that I have not found anything which points to the need for urgency and for energy

/in this struggle,

in this struggle, as if we were engaged in a great battle and for my part, I would say almost with emotion, that is the cry to be taken up. We should feel ourselves engaged in a stern struggle to utilise the wealth within America so that men's minds shall not be warped by false ideas, and faithless promises. Too often these are accepted by those who suffer as true, because they must believe in something and the life they live is too tragic and painful for them to refuse the other solutions offered to win them. All the technical resolutions passed during this third conference should serve this idea of urgency which is necessary to guide the revolutionary spirit of peoples and men in need. I therefore put forward the opinion that if we do not find rapid and practical ways of implementing these carefully studied measures, we run the risk that all that we are doing will be merely a stage of concern and striving in an apparently crippled social and economic order which cannot attain the solutions mankind is seeking. I know that I am interpreting the unanimous opinion of everyone present, and of the vast majority of the peoples of America when I declare that the universal desire is to live under a democratic order which will protect liberty and the respect of men, but the truth is that if it is not accompanied by measures of economic and social welfare, liberty is not enough and is not a standard that will inspire much enthusiasm.

/I know too



I know too that there is no political order that can use the moral forces of men as well as democracy, but there is no doubt that a man who is hungry, who cannot make provision for his family, who has no certainty of work, can never become an ardent partisan of democracy; on the contrary he may easily surrender to other false and disloyal propaganda. For this reason I go so far as to say that we must take urgent measures as though we were in a campaign, which indeed we are, because throughout the world there is an upheaval of ideas which is shaking the foundations of all our economic, political and social systems. The successful work of ECLA is a form of ensuring the success of Democracy in America, because the first reaction of men who reach a good standard of living is to believe and to place confidence in the system which brought it.

I should like to stress the cordiality and spirit of understanding which has existed among the delegates personally, and between all the delegations, both American and European, binding them into a strong unit, all striving to achieve the success we are celebrating today.

I hope that the peaceful climate of my country, the friendliness of all who live in it and the freedom in which we live have contributed to the cordiality and spirit of understanding which has reigned amongst you all. If this, which is my ambition and the fervent wish of the people of my country, is true for you, it will be a cause of great satisfaction for us for it will mean that we have made good friends.