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the emergency services? Were there alternatives? Two were talked about but not tried. One would be an administrative strike, getting rid of any form of red tape for the duration, refusing to fill any formula except the drug prescriptions. The consequent disorganization—without speaking of prosecution by the State—might have been worse. A more radical alternative would have been a faithful compliance with all the red tape but without any medical fee, hoping that the public would have taken the side of the doctors and brought the fall of the government. This would have called for a great act of trust on the part of the medical profession and an absolute certitude that the justice of their cause was crystal clear.

The bad conscience of so many doctors, or at least their uneasiness, may have led the Belgian medical profession to realize that they were creating a false problem. What they were fighting for was worth a struggle, but certain callings are out of bounds when the right to strike is used as a moral means to implement social justice. Priests, lawyers, doctors, nurses, even firemen and policemen do not strike. Their social responsibilities are such that they can never suspend the social bond that links them to the people they serve. But are we in danger of creating a new tendency by the complexity of modem technology and the means of government? If the health of the country has the solution of the social problem, what is the solution of the medical problem, which is still more needed today? Perhaps the key is the creation of a new structure, highly respected by all parties concerned, which would solve the conflicts arising from the various needs and interests represented by medical profession. Is there a scheme of justice, the government and the public at large.

In the case of the strike of the Belgian doctors it would have been very desirable that the invention of the university presidents be offered a solution for not striking, as long as the strike had not led to such an ugly issue.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY: The Right Solution To Underdevelopment?

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Physicians in the United States and other countries of the world have been witnesses to the accelerated growth of technology. To medicine, this has meant, among other things, the building of new and better hospitals with developments that were undreamed of fifty years ago. Research laboratories are now supplied with new and more complex and efficient electronic equipment, computers, and so forth. Furthermore, in developed countries, technology has also made its contribution to progress in various aspects of economic life that have a bearing on individual health: basic sanitary conditions, housing, food, education. Furthermore, this positive prospect of medicine in the developed countries is completed by an increasing progress in surgery and therapeutics, brought about by the appearance of large numbers of new and powerful drugs from modern chemistry and pharmacology. For these reasons, the practice of medicine in those countries is concerned with the care of individuals who have a longer life expectancy and better possibilities for the enjoyment of the advantage of modern life. For scientists, these features are an incentive to concentrate there and contribute to the accelerated growth of technology and the production of new material wealth.

This dynamic image of the United States, Europe and other developed countries must be contrasted with that of underdevelopment in other areas of the world, Latin America among them. We shall give specific information concerning medical life in our country, Chile, for it is the one we know best and therefore are in a position to give information that is recent and what is perhaps more important, information that is lived. Chile is a Latin American country with a population of 8 million and covering an area of 289,500 square miles. The picture of development we have made above can also be found in our country, but it is limited to a few privileged medical centers that work to maintain the rate of progress achieved in more developed centers. However, the greater part of this land lags far behind in the road to progress and the rate at which technological progress is incorporated is too slow, as will be clearly shown by the figures for rates of general development that will be discussed later. This is aggravated by the fact that Chile is a country where the rate for demographic explosion is among the highest in the world—2.8% per year—giving a figure of 33.8 live births for every 1,000 inhabitants. This meant, in 1961, 163,981 newborns. Lack of hospitals and medical care was unmistakably evidenced by the fact that 30% of these children, 80,065, did not receive medical care at time of birth. These people, handicapped at birth by the lack of medical care, live in
very poor sanitary conditions. They live in towns of which only 33% have a good water supply and only 51.6% have adequate sewage systems. Yet, the picture of sanitary conditions in rural areas is much worse. Among inhabitants of this sector, only 5% have the benefit of appropriate sewage systems and 60% of them lack these services completely.

For these, as well as other reasons, the trend in the Chilean rural population, as in other Latin American countries, is to migrate towards the cities and industrial centers. These cities do not have the proper housing to offer to this new labor force, a condition which forces them to settle in slum areas that surround all the major Latin American cities, and where sanitary conditions are even more deplorable than in the rural areas.

Housing is another factor connected with the health of the Chilean population. In the year 1960, a shortage of 375,000 houses handicapped a total of 2,500,000 persons. Our Ten Year Development Plan sets a goal of 560,000 houses for the 1960-1970 decade. This implies a heavy strain on our economy, and does not solve the problem in its entire scope. What is more, the sanitary conditions of many of our present housing schemes are inadequate, and this puts the burden of patient care on hospitals, to an extent that is beyond their possibilities. Due to this, many of the patients who could easily be cared for in their own homes must be sent to hospitals if they are to receive proper assistance.

The picture of the conditions in which the Chilean population lives can be completed with the mention of other aspects, among which the problem of food and nutrition is important. In this country, farm production is in acute shortage. Food production increases at a rate of 1.9% per year, not enough to cover the needs of a population growing at a rate of 2.8% per year. We must attribute to these basic factors the importance of our people in matters concerning the distribution and conservation of food. Our people, who are deficient, and we must consider also that the purchasing power of the food consumed by our people in the lower income groups is below a level considered as adequate. All these factors can be held accountable for the decency of the food consumed by our people. One parameter that shows the very clear-cut relationship between the weight and height of children of school age. There is a marked difference between children attending public schools and children in private schools.

The educational problem that directly relates to some of the aspects of proper nutrition is worsened by the high incidence of illiteracy. In a population of 6,050,000 people over 6 years of age, 1,375,000, or 23%, are illiterate, and furthermore, a similar amount does not have a working literacy. We can bring to a close his description of the facts that have a direct influence on the health of our population with a figure concerning the organization of the Chilean family. A high percentage of families are not properly constituted, and the means that 17% of all children are born out of wedlock.

These social, economic and sanitary conditions of our country bring about the conditions that we shall now discuss. These indicators are a gauge for our understanding of the magnitude of the problems that must be tackled by the medical profession. The general death rate in Chile is high. 11.7% for the year 1961. Of this figure, approximately one third died without medical care of any kind. Child mortality is also very high. In every 1,000 births 28 were reported before reaching their first year of age. This last figure represents approximately one third of the total death rate for the country. The importance of medical care in the control of child mortality is highlighted by the fact that this rate, for low income groups, is 157. In the same group, medical care reduces this figure to 102, and in high income groups of our population the rate is only 57. Child mortality rates mean, among other things, that the life expectancy of a Chilean born at this time is only 55 years, almost 20 years below the life expectancy in developed countries. Thus, the majority of the population that we must care for is young, 37% of individuals below 15 years of age, 46% of individuals below 45 years of age. One third and our citizens and 8% of those between 65 years of age. The number of hospitals and hospital beds is also insufficient; 3.8 beds per 1,000 inhabitants which compares unfavorably with the figure of 10 beds for every thousand found in the more developed countries.

These different aspects of our socio-economic situation can be easily understood by a physician, and they go to explain the magnitude of the problems that have to be faced by our government and our Chilean colleagues. Chile recently lived an important step in its development. Chilean voters were given to choose, in the presidential election held in early September of this year, between a democratic form of government and a Marxist solution to its problem. The importance of this choice was not only domestic in its projections. It could point to a way for many other Latin American countries.

The anxiety caused by the progressive regression of our situation convinced 38.6% of our population that Marxism was the only means by which our society could be restructured. However, 55% of the voters decided to support the Christian Democratic candidate, Eduardo Frei, and his proposals for a revolution in freedom as the means to restructure the administration and achieve maximum efficiency in the production and distribution of...
wealth. It is a Christian solution to our problems, and it entails a guarantee of human rights. It will work for justice in the distribution of wealth, incorporating all our citizens to work activities, to produce and enjoy the technological progress of our era.

Thus, democracy is faced with a great challenge. Our people were offered two solutions to overcome under-development. Christian Democracy and Marxism were put before them as the only two possible paths towards progress. The voters, with great civic maturity, decided to try Christian Democracy. For the next six years our country and perhaps many others in Latin America will watch anxiously for the results. If progress is not substantially speeded, Marxism will, unhappily, rise to power in 1970. During the six years that lie ahead of us, we shall have to overcome the difficulties that will naturally result from the handicaps that have been described above, and from the systematic opposition of the Marxist groups, for they have already announced what their position will be on all the steps that our new government will take. Democracy was at stake on September 11 in this remote corner of the world, but the scale was tipped in its favour and it won its battle. However, what is really won was merely the right to continue fighting during the next six years and prove to the world that there is indeed a possibility for progress and Christian redistribution of wealth, all within the framework of freedom and respect for human rights.

In spite of the country's readiness to create the organization needed for a better solution of the problems of under-development, the magnitude of these problems is such that it alone composes against finding the proper solution. Proceedings of the recent Development and World Trade Conference in Geneva made quite evident that, whilst the rate of progress and production of new wealth is increasing in the developed world, there is a tendency to increase the rates of production and the incorporation of new capital. These developments are insufficient to meet the demands for consumption, which is the result of the new wealth situation is that underdeveloped countries are getting poorer and poorer while developed countries are becoming wealthier. The gap created between both groups widens, and brings with it anxiety and unrest in many areas of the world. These problems can be solved at the domestic level, in most cases, by providing higher education and training programmes for the youth in the developing countries. However, the solution to the international level. In developed countries, governments have a position of leadership that gives them power to level the income of rich and poor alike, through taxation and other instruments provided by the economy. They can plan in the general interest, leaving to private enterprise the initiative solely in the production of goods bought and sold by the product of the private sector. No such mechanism exists at the international level. Governments have planned to satisfy the interests of mankind, or at least one group in the world, but the large group of countries organized, but that most of the developed countries, and they have done so for their own protection. In this aspect, we find that at the international level, the problems that existed 50 years ago at the domestic level. History shows us that at that time, in many countries in the world, redistribution of wealth through charity, philanthropic organizations, scientific foundations and other devises were envisioned and put in practice by some private individuals. As an illustration, let us mention, in our country, the Beneficencia Publica (Public Charities), entrusted with the health problems of our population through the coordination of individual efforts in charity hospitals. These very admirable activities were subsequently absorbed by the Government, who understood that it was its duty to care for the health of its citizens. For this reason, health today is the responsibility of the Government. Wherever the limitations we have described as the right that each citizen can demand and expect to get.

At the international level, the evolution of these ideas on redistribution shows that private initiative is already on the move. There are many international organizations, founded by individuals who understand the need for redistribution of technological knowledge and culture in the world. Governments have participated at the international level with undertakings such as the Marshall Plan and the Alliance for Progress as a means to cooperate in the improvement of development level. But we can readily see that it is not enough. The urgency of the situation calls for a world wide awakening of its consciousness. We Christians must work in Christian charity and justice to seek a rapid incorporation of technological progress for the entire world. We must fight to give the world the right to enjoy health and economic well-being. We must take stock of the fact that underdeveloped countries are not abstractions, but large masses of people where disease, hunger and lack of culture are the rule, people who are denied every chance in life. We must keep in mind that these underdeveloped countries are not a simple collection of appalling statistics, but rather, millions of ill-fed children, haggard faces, begging hands. As physicians and Christians, we can easily visualize the emotional elements in these descriptions and we should start work among our fellow citizens to impress upon them the ideas on international redistribution, so that we may urge our governments to take speedy action and find the proper solutions to the problems of under-development. During the Geneva conference, the undeveloped nations formed a block to obtain better prices for our primary products. The dialogue has begun. There is awareness of the existence of the problem and the need for its solution. Governments must move in search of the first steps that can bring new horizons to our present day world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY