

URUGUAY ELECTIONS

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BY LINEL MARTIN

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IN THE END IT WAS THE POWER OF THE OLIGARCHY AND THEIR
POLITICAL MACHINE THAT SWAMPED THE LEFT COALITION BROAD

FRONT IN URUGUAY. EXPECTATIONS HAD RUN HIGH THAT THE BROAD
FRONT, A HETEROGENEOUS AMALGAM RUNNING FROM CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS
THROUGH THE SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST PARTIES TO THE MUCH MORE
MILITANT MARCH 26 MOVEMENT, COULD PULL OFF ANOTHER CHILE.

BUT THE POPULAR UNITY VICTORY IN CHILE OPENING THE DOOR TO A
SOCIALIST REVOLUTION BY ELECTORAL MEANS, WAS, AS FIDEL CASTRO
CALLED IT IN SANTIAGO DE CHILE LAST WEEK, "A UNIQUE OCCURRENCE".
IT WAS NOT LIKELY THAT LIGHTNING COULD STRIKE TWICE IN THE
SAME PLACE: IT DIDN'T.

IN COLD POLITICAL TERMS, THE BROAD FRONT WAS DOOMED BECAUSE
IT COULD NOT MAKE MORE THAN A SLIGHT DENT IN THE RURAL AND
SMALLER CITY STRONGHOLDS OF THE TRADITIONAL PARTIES THAT HAVE
RULED THE COUNTRY FOR A WHUNDRED YEARS. OF THE 1,500,000
VOTERS, MORE THAN HALF OF THEM COME FROM AREAS OUTSIDE THE
THE CAPITAL. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT IN THESE DISTRICTS THE BROAD ~~FRONT~~
~~FRONT~~ FRONT COULD MUSTER NO MORE THAN ABOUT
4,000 VOTES.

POLITICAL MACHINES ARE POWERFULLY ENTRENCHED IN THE RURAL
AREAS AND SMALLER CITIES. IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH
THE PEOPLE DIRECTLY BECAUSE OF LACK OF LEFT POLITICAL
ACTIVITISTS ON THE ONE HAND AND THE ACTIVE PERSECUTION OF THOSE
THAT THERE ARE, ON THE OTHER. THESE DISTRICTS WERE BOMBARDED
DAILY WITH ANTI-LEFT PROPAGANDA AND THE BROAD FRONT HAD NO
~~WAVY~~ EFFECTIVE WAY OF BREAKING THROUGH THE BARRAGE.

THE LANDSLIDE DEFEAT SUFFERED BY THE BROAD FRONT

IN THE AREAS OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL SHOW UP IN THE

PRESIDENTIAL VOTE TALLY (WITH THREE DISTRICTS STILL NOT
NOT COUNTED:

COLORADO PARTY	595,57
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BLANCO PARTY	585,974
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AMBLE FRONT	271,636
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THE URUGUAYAN ELECTIONS SHOW THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED

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IN BUCKING AN ENTRENCHED OLIGARCHY BY ELECTORAL MEANS
IN LATIN AMERICA. THE GOVERNMENT HAS FOLLOWED A REPRESSIVE POL
POLICY THAT HAS MADE FAIR ELECTIONS A VIRTUAL IMPOSSIBILITY.

URUGUAYANS HAVE LIVED UNDER A REGIME OF SECURITY MEASURES
FOR THREE AND A HALF YEARS AND THE ELECTIONS THEMSELVES
TOOK PLACE UNDER MARTIAL LAW. THE GOVERNMENT HAS PERSUED
AN ACTIVE POLICY OF CENSORSHIP: FOR EXAMPLE THE NEWSPAPER
OF THE BROAD FRONT "LA IDEA" WAS SHUT DOWN AND THE CHRISTIAN
DEMOCRATIC "3) 43 3-5 REPEAT "EL ECO" WAS ONLY ALLOWED

TO BEGIN PUBLISH REPEAT PUBLISHING AGAIN AFTER THE ELECTIONS.
GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP WITHHELD NEWS OF THE RELEASE OF THE
INDUSTRIALIST BERENBAU BY THE TUPACATOS UNTIL A DAY AFTER THE
VOTING.

THE HIGHLY COMPLICATED ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN
URUGUAY IS ALSO STACKED AGAINST A THIRD PARTY. FOR ONE THING
THERE IS AN OLD COMPULSORY VOTING LAW ON THE BOOKS WHICH
HAS NEVER BEEN ENFORCED UNTIL THIS ELECTIONS. BY ENFORCING IT,
A SECTOR OF THE POPULATION - USUALLY PASSIVE AND NON-POLITICAL-
WAS COTTEN OUT TO VOTE AND AS EXPECTED THEIR VOTE WAS HEAVILY
IN FAVOR OF THE TRADITIONAL PARTIES. PUNISHMENT FOR NOT
VOTING IS SEVERAL FINES, PROHIBITION ON THE SALE OR PURCHASE
OF REAL ESTATE, CARS OR OTHER VALUABLE GOODS; LOSS OF THE RIGHT TO
REPEAT LOSS OF THE RIGHT TO GOVERNMENT JOBS AND STATE
EDUCATIONAL A REPEAT AID ETC.

VICTORY. UNDER THIS LAW THE MAJOR PARTIES IN URUGUAY
CAN RUN MANY CANDIDATES IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS FOR THE SAME
OFFICE. THE MAN WITH THE LARGEST VOTE WITHIN THE PARTY GETS

ALL THE VOTES OF HIS FELLOW PARTY CANDIDATES WHO RAN FOR THE
SAME OFFICE. THIS IS A VOTE CATCHING DEVICE THAT ALLOWS A
PARTY
TO SPREAD A BIG POLITICAL NET TO CATCH VOTERS WITH DIFFERENT
PROPENSITIES.

FINALLY, THERE IS THE QUESTION OF THE BALLOT COUNT REPEAT
BALLOT COUNTING. THIS HAS BEEN THE SLOWEST AND MOST
IRREGULAR COUNT IN THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY. IN FACT AT THIS DATE
IT STILL CANNOT BE DEFINITELY STATED WHETHER THE
COLORADO, BORDABERRY OR THE BLANCO, FERREIRA WILL WIN.
THE INITIAL COUNT TOOK OVER A WEEK: IN PAST REPEAT IN
IN PAST ELECTIONS IT HAS TAKEN ONLY ONE OR TWO DAYS. THE
DEFINITIVE VOTE COUNTING ONLY BEGAN LAST SUNDAY AND
THE FINAL COUNT WILL NOT BE KNOWN UNTIL FEBRUARY. THE
PRESIDENT TAKES OFFICE ON MARCH 1. WITH 170,000
VOTES CHALLENGED BECAUSE OF RESIDENCE AND OTHER LEGAL REQUISITES
THE VOTE COULD POSSIBLY BUT NOT LIKELY SWING TO THE BLANCO
CANDIDATE.

THE BLANCO PARTY AND THE BROAD FRONT HAVE CHARGED THAT THERE
HAS BEEN FRAUD IN THE VOTE COUNTING AND THAT IS THE REASON
FOR THE LONG DELAY REPEAT DELAYS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADMITTED ERRORS BUT

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IS THE REASON FOR THE LONG DELAYS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADMITTED
ERRORS BUT ATTRIBUTE THEM TO "INEXPERIENCE".

THAT COMING FROM A PARTY THAT HAS BEEN IN POWER FOR ALL BUT
TEN YEARS OF THIS CENTURY TAKES EVEN THE MOST CREDULOUS

THE BROAD FRONT ALSO HAS CHARGED THAT MANY OF THEIR POLL
WATCHERS WERE FORCED, SOMETIMES AT THE POINT OF A PISTOL,
TO LEAVE THE POLLING PLACES WHEN BALLOTS WERE BEING COUNTED
STOP MANY BROAD FRONTERS ARE CONVINCED THAT WHEN SOME DAY
GREATER LIGHT IS SHED ON THE ELECTION PROCEDURES, THAT
FRAUD WILL BE SHOWN TO HAVE PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE.

ALTHOUGH THE BROAD FRONT HAS LOST, ITS POLITICAL EFFORTS,
ACCORDING TO URUGUAYAN POLITICAL MILITANTS, HAVE NOT BEEN
IN VAIN. POWERFUL AND DYNAMIC GRASSROOTS COMMITTEES WERE
SET UP, ESPECIALLY IN MONTEVIDEO. THE BROAD FRONT PRESIDENTIAL
CANDIDATE, RETIRED GENERAL LIBER SEREGNI HAS CONSTANTLY
STRESSED THE NEED CONTINUE THE ACTIVITIES OF THESE
COMMITTEES - WIN OR LOSE.

BORDABERRY, THE MOST LIKELY VICTOR IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN HAS SAID THAT HE WILL FOLLOW THE GENERAL POLICIES OF HIS PREDECESSOR, PACHECO ARECO, THIS MEANS RULE IN THE NAME OF THE OLIGARCHY AND MORE REPRESSION OF POPULAR CAUSES, IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT THE NUMBER OF POLITICAL

PRISONERS WILL GROW AMONG THEM THOSE LOCATED AND HE REPEAT HELD WITH CHARGE IN A NUMBER OF CONCENTRATION CAMPS LIKE THAT OF PUNTA RIELES

MANY BELIEVE THAT THE FRUSTRATION OF THE ELECTORAL DEFEAT AND THE EXPOSURE OF THE UNFAIRNESS OF THE ENTIRE RECORDAL SYSTEM WILL STRENGTHEN THE TUPAMARO ORGANIZATION

SUBSTITUTE LAST PARAGRAPH BEGINNING WITH "MANY BELIEVE..

FOR THE FOLLOWING-----

ONE THE QUESTIONS MOST ASKED IS, WHAT ABOUT THE TUPAMAROS? 1 THE TUPAMAROS WERE ALWAYS VERY SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES

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OF A BROAD FRONT VICTORY BUT GAVE THEIR CRITICAL SUPPORT TO THE EFFORT IN THE NAME OF UNITY. INFORMED SOURCES SAY THAT THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN HELPED THE TUPAMAROS ORGANIZE A BROADER BASE AMONG THE MASSES WHICH WILL AID THEIR URBAN GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES IN THE YEARS TO COME.

MANY BELIEVE THAT THE FRUSTRATION OF THE ELECTORAL DEFEAT PLUS THE EXPOSURE OF THE EXPOSURE OF THE ENTIRE ELECTORAL SYSTEM WILL STRENGTHEN THE TUPAMARO ORGANIZATION WHICH., AFTER THE RECENT SENSATIONAL PRISON BREAK OF OVER A HUNDRED OF ITS MEMBER, IS STILL VERY MUCH IN TACT.

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