

democracy." Many Peruvians were aware of opinion polls that indicated Belaúnde was the only candidate with a good chance to win the crucial 36 per cent and so they voted for him even if he was not their first choice. A prominent Belaúnde slogan had shrewdly capitalized on this: "El voto que no se pierde" (a vote for Belaúnde is a vote that won't be wasted).

Peruvians were also sensitive to the problems of a democratic government when the executive does not enjoy a majority in the Congress. Many Peruvians blamed the shortcomings of Belaúnde's administration in the 1960s upon an uncooperative opposition. Now, after forging an alliance with Luis Bedoya's Popular Christian party (PPC), which finished third in the elections with slightly less than 10 per cent of the vote, Belaúnde and his Popular Action party (AP) enjoy solid positions in both houses of Congress: 108 deputies in the 180-member House and at least 30 senators in the 60-member Senate.

Although internal political dynamics are the most important factor in Peru's successful start on the road back to democracy, the role of the U.S. should not be discounted. President Carter deserves to count Peru as one of the successes of his "human rights" policy. Again, Peruvians had an eye on the Bolivian experience; they knew that the United States would apply sanctions against a coup. On election night, as it became clear that the voting had been orderly and honest, U.S. Ambassador Harry W. Shlaudeman appeared on Peruvian television to read a congratulatory letter from President Carter, indicating that the United States viewed the Peruvian process "with sympathy." In the three months since the elections the United States has agreed to provide at least \$12 million in new loans, and the World Bank \$1 billion.

Rather than criticize the United States for its political nudges, most Peruvians welcomed U.S. support as a curb against military officers who might have last-minute doubts about relinquishing power. Belaúnde was the candidate who had not only the best antimilitary credentials but also the strongest U.S. connections. Belaúnde lived in the U.S. for much of his decade in exile and spent his last years in the States at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. His campaign had the most "American" touch and, presumably, the greatest number of dollars.

Still, a successful return to democracy in Peru will require more than the fervent hope of Peruvians and the support of the United States. Belaúnde the magnificent campaigner is not the proven executive. Belaúnde won because more voters saw him as the "least bad" than as "the best." This perception was especially strong among Peru's leftist voters, who in the 1978 constituent assembly elections accounted for over 33 per cent of the votes, a much higher percentage than in the 1960s. Many leftists voted for Belaúnde only because they believed he would be less repressive than his major rival, APRA's Armando Villanueva. Some who voted for the Left in 1978 deserted ranks in anger at its constant squabbling and inability to unite behind any fewer than ten candidates. Also, the Cuban exodus, well publicized in Peru because of the role of its embassy, badly tarnished the image of Peru's Left. At approximately 17 per cent, the Left vote in 1980 was only half that of 1978.

A Belaúnde presidency symbolizes a "return to normalcy" for various reasons. Now sixty-seven, Belaúnde had been the most important rising political star of the '50s and '60s. Further, his campaign promised a modification of the main Velasco reforms that had withstood the Morales Bermúdez years: Many state enterprises would be returned to private hands and agrarian cooperatives would be permitted to divide their lands into private par-

cells. In other respects Belaúnde's platform echoed his 1963 platform in its emphasis upon specific projects, especially roads and irrigation for the agricultural area between the mountains and the jungle, and its tenor was populist. One slogan proclaimed: "A President for Everyone."

Of course the 1980s are not the 1950s, yet I believe Belaúnde will be the first Peruvian president in thirty-five years to complete an elected term. An architect of modest demeanor and vision, he was perhaps the wrong president for Peru in 1973, when great change was needed, but he could be the right president for 1980. Moreover, over the last decade Belaúnde seems to have learned important lessons in the art of political negotiation and conciliation. Peru's cyclical economy is on the upswing now and should be boosted by foreign aid and investment, including investment in oil exploration. Finally, after years of serving as the scapegoat for all Peru's problems, the military is demoralized; hard-line elements were too weak to seize power during the severe labor unrest of 1977-79, and they must be weaker now after the successful completion of the electoral process.

*Cynthia McClintock, Assistant Professor of Political Science at George Washington University and author of the forthcoming Peasant Cooperatives and Political Change in Peru (Princeton), spent several weeks in Peru during the campaign period.*

## EXCURSUS 3

### Alfons Heck on WEST GERMANY'S GYPSIES: JUSTICE DENIED?

The Association of German Gypsies recently staged a mass meeting in Bergen-Belsen, the former Nazi concentration camp, with the intention of sending an emphatic message to the West German Government: Gypsy persecution did not end with the Nazi regime. Unlike many victims of the Holocaust, who received substantial compensation for their suffering, most surviving gypsies are still waiting for a fair settlement. By their estimates it should total about \$365 million, part of which is earmarked for a gypsy cultural center in Paris. Although Chancellor Schmidt is sympathetic to their demands, there is virtually no chance that Bonn will recognize the validity of all these claims, since West Germany's Federal Supreme Court ruled in 1956 that until May of 1943 most deportations of gypsies were carried out for "military" or "crime-preventing" reasons, not on racial grounds. Most gypsies, if one accepts this logic, were gassed, shot, and starved to death as "asocial, criminal elements." Anyone so classified is not a "genuine" political victim of Nazism and is not entitled to restitution, except for a token five deutschmarks—about \$3.00—for each day spent in a death camp.

Although the gypsies did not suffer losses comparable to the Jews', an estimated 500,000 died, among them nearly all their leaders. At the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, U.S. prosecutor James E. Heath asked the accused S.S. General Otto Ohlendorf of the Gestapo Security Office why so many gypsies had been killed. The general blandly asserted that "they took part in spy activities during the war." So far not a single gypsy spy ring has been discovered.

Most of Europe's present six million gypsies grew up

after the Nazi persecution, but, as always, they are treated as social outcasts. The majority of West Germany's fifty thousand gypsies belong to the Sinti tribe, descendants of a people driven out of India's Punjab region by invading Arabs about a thousand years ago. The Sintis appeared in Central Europe five hundred years ago, while the other large group of gypsies, the Roma, crossed into Germany from Hungary only a century ago. Because of their refusal to forgo their itinerant way of life, as well as their stubborn insistence on putting loyalty to clan above allegiance to host country, gypsies have always tangled with the authorities—whether under Kaiser, republic, or dictatorship.

As early as 1782, the Duke of Baden decreed that "gypsies and other useless vagabonds shall be put to death if they are apprehended twice." In the current social order of the affluent Bundesrepublik they are Germany's "untouchables," far below even the foreign guest workers. "I sometimes try to pass myself off as an Italian or Greek," said a young gypsy, "but it usually doesn't work. Germans know their gypsies." Most gypsies, though, don't deny their origin and are fanatically loyal to their clan. Dr. Andreas Hundsalz, a government advisor on gypsy affairs, explains that gypsies commit more misdemeanors than the rest of the population but seldom engage in acts of violence, especially sex crimes. That, as Dr. Hundsalz notes, "is a grave violation of their code of honor and calls for the worst penalty that can befall any gypsy: expulsion from the band."

Gypsies have traditionally pursued door-to-door trade—from cheap household goods to furs and antiques; from baskets to livestock, especially horses. They have also fixed pots and pans, told fortunes, and made music. Very few have been able to adapt to the changed needs of modern life. Many families, no longer able to travel in their camper trucks, rely on social assistance. The ones who remain on the road are commonly harassed by the authorities, especially in small towns. Some larger cities have passed ordinances to prohibit a further influx of "landrovers," as they are officially called. Usually, intervention is more direct and brutal. "Almost as soon as one of us parks his camper on a public lot, the 'friendly' police show up and chase us away," says Oscar Rose, executive member of the Federation of German Sintis. "Of course camping grounds are also off-limits to us, and we are usually shunted off to the city dump. Too bad there isn't an Auschwitz anymore where they can ship us off to," he added bitterly.

The pleasant city of Arolsen, where hundreds of gypsies have been meeting for an annual get-together, suddenly withdrew permission this year in obedience to the wishes of most townspeople, who protested against the "festival of the unwashed." But the town fathers readily welcomed a reunion of the infamous S.S. "Death-Head" division, some of whose members were concentration camp guards. "The truth is that gypsies remain the forgotten victims of Nazism," charges Gratter Puxon, the English general secretary of the Roma World Union. Most Germans, thirty-four years after the war, are not even aware that the gypsies were on Hitler's hit-list of "subhumans." Many don't care. As citizens, the gypsies were never considered an asset. Even their language—the Romany, a mixture of dialects of their host country and their own jargon—sounds to outsiders like a code.

While the Society for Endangered Peoples warns that the existence of European gypsies is threatened, impartial observers believe such an assessment is too bleak. But there is no doubt that official indifference often becomes outright discrimination. The city of Bad Hersfeld, for instance, has a population of thirty thousand but com-

plains that its "large number" of two hundred gypsies, most of whom live in substandard housing next to the town dump, constitutes a severe problem. Why? Everytime the city government proposes to upgrade the dismal shacks, aroused citizens block the initiative. "Throw the scum out," is a sentiment freely expressed in the local press. Some smaller towns have bribed gypsy families to move away permanently. In the long run it's cheaper than to continue paying welfare.

In nearly all German cities transient gypsies, closely watched by the police, are required to park in the most undesirable parts of town, and often they are asked to move on after three days. More than any other segment of the population they are easy targets of both social ostracism and official harassment, often with rather extreme consequences. Between 1950 and 1967, for example, numerous gypsies living in the Cologne area were deprived of their German citizenship for minor offenses against the law. By comparison, even the Nazis were not totally without feeling. "Under Hitler we were at least Germans," said an elderly gypsy sadly, "while under this government we don't even exist."

*Alfons Heck has written extensively on Nazi Germany.*

## EXCURSUS 4

### Rosa Jordan on THE PRICE OF MEXICO'S OIL

The Mexican petroleum industry is concentrated in a region that encompasses the two small cities of Miniatlan and Coatzacoalcos, a fishing village named Allende, and a relatively dense rural population along a river which, just here, empties into the Gulf of Mexico. Not more than a decade ago one saw in its clear pools reflections of white egrets balanced on one leg, watched fishermen draw in full nets, and gazed across miles of green and tranquil tropical savanna.

Today there are no such vistas. The air closes in, yellow-gray, and visibility on most days is no more than a few hundred feet. Respiratory diseases requiring hospitalization—mainly of children—are five times the national average. Noise is at such volume that for many hours each day there can be no lectures at the Technological Institute or at other schools located near main traffic arteries. Fishermen cast nets at a point farther out in the river, where it spills into the Gulf, drawing forth fish as polluted with mercury as the infamous Bay of Minimata. Nearby, on Isla de los Parajos (ironically named—a blackened waste where no bird has been seen in years), scores of petrochemical industries spew poisons into air, water, and earth. The Government of Mexico is responsible for the control of these deadly emissions. There is no control.

What will they say a decade hence, when neurological damage has been done and lead and mercury contamination have taken their toll in deformed infants? Will they say that *Minimata* is a Japanese word—how could they know the disease might be contracted on Mexican soil? Or that no one had told them that workers regularly exposed to benzene-laden air are prime candidates for leukemia? Or will they say, as now, that Mexico needs its petroleum industry and this is the price it must pay?

*Rosa Jordan spent six recent months in Mexico.*