

Election May Determine Democracy's Survival in Latin America

By JAMES R. WHELAN
United Press International
CARACAS (UPI)—Three million Venezuelans, steeped in a political heritage of tyranny and revolt, go to the polls today in a national election that may point out the path down which all Latin America will tread.

At stake is the Venezuelan presidency, both houses of Congress, state legislatures and city council.

In a larger sense, the survival of democracy in Latin America is at stake.

The United States looks on Venezuela as a model of what can and must be done to achieve peaceful reform and, eventually, political stability. International communism, on the other hand, has designated the oil-rich republic as its No. 1 target in Latin America.

Coming on the heels of a rash of military takeovers, the Venezuelan elections loom as Democracy's symbolic reply to those who say democratic gov-

ernment cannot work in the explosive political climate of present day Latin America.

It's a miracle they are being held at all.

Four and a half years ago, when democracy took its first faltering steps in Venezuela, there were few willing to predict that the country's first freely elected government would survive, much less see the day when it would be replaced by another chosen in free elections. It is no surprise that the past four years have seen constant war without quarter to maintain democracy — first against extremists of the far right and then those of the left. The latter has been actively and energetically aided by Cuba's Fidel Castro.

That democracy has survived this long is largely a tribute to the present president, Romulo Betancourt. If he succeeds in staying in office until next March 4, when his term expires, he will be the first popu-



FACE FREE ELECTION — For the first time in the history of this turbulent republic, one freely-elected president will preside over the free and open election of his successor. The President is Romulo Betancourt (right) and Raul Leoni (shown in 1960 photo), Congress Party candidate, has a good chance to be the successor. (UPI)

larly elected president in Venezuela's 153-year history to complete his tenure.

So far failing to overthrow the Betancourt government, a determined and tightly organized Communist underground now is attempting to sabotage the elections. Success seems unlikely.

A total of 3,269,986 Venezuelans — 93.9 per cent of those eligible — have registered to vote, despite Communist warnings and occasional attacks. All citizens over 18 years of age are eligible to vote regardless of their sex or literacy. Voting is done by colored paper ballots — each party having its own electoral color.

Issues tend to be fuzzy since all major candidates are left of center although the two extreme left parties — Communist and Movement of the Revolutionary

Left — have been banned.

President Betancourt's own party, Accion Democratica (AD), is favored to win because it is the best organized.

The AD's presidential candi-

date is Raul Leoni, 58, a Betancourt supporter who first was cast into tyrant's jails at 16. He was co-founder of the AD with Betancourt but remained in the shadows while the president became the public symbol of the party. He has long been associated with organized labor and political action against the tyrannical right.

Most observers believe Leoni would pursue essentially the same policies as Betancourt. This means economic reform at home and, in the international field, remaining an ally of the United States, hostility to the Castro regime and strong opposition to military takeovers elsewhere in the hemisphere.

Leoni's strongest opposition is from Jovito Villalba, 55, a former classmate and co-revolutionary. Villalba is leader of the Union Republicana Democratica (URD), slightly to the left of the AD. Villalba actually was elected president in 1952 but incumbent Marcos Perez Jimenez, seeing returns go against him, voided the election and

stayed on as dictator, exiling his leading opponent.

Another strong candidate is Rafael Caldera, 47, head of COPEI, the most moderate of major parties and the one supported by the Roman Catholic church. The darkhorse is Arturo Uslar Pietri, 57, an intellectual running as an independent. He is a respected literary figure and onetime holder of several government ministries.

Other candidates are Wolfgang Larrazabal, retired highest ranking naval officer; Raul Ramos Gimenez, a former leader of the AD, and German Borregales, a newspaper columnist and only right-wing candidate.

The campaign has been a spirited battle of ideas and personalities, despite Communist terrorists' attempts to turn it into a chaos of bombs and bullets. Every conceivable campaign appeal has been employed — radio, television, leaflets, theater film clips, newspapers and magazines, loudspeakers,

rallies and posters. Especially posters.

Millions of posters, some neatly printed, some hand scribbled, are plastered or painted on walls, lampposts, trees, sidewalks and vehicles — even on the flanks of animals — as the election furor picks up.

One visiting U.S. editor said he had never before in his life seen such a profusion of political propaganda.

But from behind the ballyhoo and terrorists' gunfire and bombs will emerge a man who will inherit one of the biggest prizes — those of Betancourt. And the job he will accept to it steeped in peril and problems.

Venezuela has had more than 50 major rebellions, 26 constitutions and of its 38 presidents only half have finished their terms. Betancourt, it appears, will be the only freely elected president ever to complete his tenure.

In this political climate, democracy is making its stand in Venezuela.

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St. Mary's Field To Be Dedicated to Memory of Kennedy

The athletic field now being readied on Black Oak Drive and a future high school gymnasium will be dedicated to the memory of the late President John F. Kennedy, Mike Soran, president of the St. Mary's High School student body, announced last week.

A bronze plaque noting the dedication will be placed on the present multi-purpose building until the new building is erected, it was explained.

The Rev. John Keane, high school principal, announced an essay contest will be conducted "to show the appropriateness of this dedication and to sharpen awareness of Kennedy's favorite themes of courage, vigor and physical fitness plus his unprecedented reliance on American youth."

speaker at the Roosevelt Memorial dinner. He was asked by Mrs. Edward Kelly, general chairman of the dinner, to autograph a picture for the Sisters of St. Mary's who were unable to attend.

The late president rejected the photo as too "dour." He later sent the Sisters an autographed photo of his own choosing. Although already late for his departure from Medford, Kennedy gave a 15 minute interview. The two chairs occupied by the late president and his wife are now marked by plaques sent by Congressman Robert Duncan, Medford, D-Ore.

Plans for Gymnasium
Plans for the memorial gymnasium will be projected probably into the centenary year, according to the Sisters. The year 1964 marks 100 years since the arrival into this area (at Jacksonville) of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, teachers at St. Mary's.

The announcement of the planned dedication was sent to Mrs. Kennedy with a letter of condolence from the students. Their offering of prayers, 1,200 masses to be attended, 1,100 Holy Communions, and 1,000 rosaries, was included.

White House Open For Public Tours

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The White House, still draped in mourning crepe, opened for public tours again Friday at the request of Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy.

Visitors will see the famed East Room, the largest in the executive mansion, as it looked when the body of Mrs. Kennedy's husband lay in repose there last weekend. President Kennedy was assassinated a week ago in Dallas, Tex.

The former First Lady inspected the East Room and the other public rooms of the White House before she flew to Hyannis Port, Mass., Thursday to spend Thanksgiving with the Kennedy family.

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14-lb. Dryer	Norge—With 24.95 Value Towel & Linen Set. Reg. 159.95	119 ⁹⁵
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Bedroom

Twin Foam Rubber Sets	77 ⁶⁰
Twin Innerspring Sets	38 ⁸⁰
510 Coil Full Size Sets	49 ⁸⁰
5 Pc. Bedroom Set	Dresser, chest, Mirror, twin beds. 99 ⁹⁵
Bunk Bed - Foam Mattresses	59 ⁴⁰
	• 3 pc. Sets • 5 pc. Sets • King Size

Dining Room

3 pc. Dinette Set	17 ⁸⁵
5 pc. Dinette Set	37 ²⁶
Early American	58 ⁶⁰
	• Hutches • 9 pc. Sets • Odd Chairs

Living Room

Sofa Sleeper	Washable Vinyl	128 ⁸⁰
Daveno & Club Chair	Nylon Upholstery	99 ⁵⁰
Thin Arm Long Sofa		99 ⁶⁰
6 pc. Western Set	Daveno, 2 Chairs, 3 Tables	178 ⁶⁷
Studio Daveno	6 Ft.	39 ⁵⁰
Odd Tables	from	3 ⁰⁰
Table Lamps	from	2 ⁰⁰
Swivel Rocker	Nylon Upholstery	19 ⁹⁵
Reclining Chairs		39 ⁵⁰
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