

THE COLOMBIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION  
OF 1970: A NEAR END TO  
TRADITIONAL RULE?

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Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS  
December, 1975

Thesis

1975

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Professor Franz von Sauer, my thesis adviser, for his invaluable assistance and guidance during the research for this thesis. I also wish to thank Professors Harold V. Sare and Thomas G. Kielhorn for their constructive criticisms and assistance given in the preparation of this work.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. The Problem

The Colombian presidential election of 1970 created one of the most serious political crises the country has faced since 1948; the near end of traditional rule. This entailed the threat of defeat by an outside party of the National Front.

Since 1958 Colombia had been governed by the Frente Nacional, or National Front, an unusual form of coalition arrangement between the two major political parties. This arrangement can be called unusual because the rules governing the National Front were incorporated into the Constitution which, among other things, provided that the coalition agreement should last sixteen years. The Frente Nacional had the effect of institutionalizing, or "freezing," electoral competition between the two principal political parties. This meant that the parties would endorse a single, mutually acceptable candidate on a rotation basis and that the voters would ratify the convention's choice. Political power was arranged between the two parties in such a way that third parties were placed at a considerable disadvantage in gaining power by excluding them from any

meaningful role in government. Although there were several third party challenges, none had seriously threatened the existence of the Frente Nacional until 1970.<sup>1</sup> The challenge came from the Alianza Nacional Popular (ANAPO), or National Popular Alliance. This party was organized by ex-dictator Guastavo Rojas Pinilla. He had run the country from 1953 until his overthrow in 1957, and he used this party to return to power. In his first effort to win the presidency in 1962, he polled a mere two per cent of the vote, but his electoral strength grew. By 1966 ANAPO won 28 per cent of the vote with a Liberal stand-in candidate for Rojas. While ANAPO seemed to gain strength, the voter turnout for the National Front candidates declined. Based on this trend, some persons forecasted that Rojas Pinilla could become a formidable contender for the presidency in 1970.

In the presidential election of 1970, under National Front guidelines, no Liberal candidate was permitted to run; this meant that it was the Conservatives' turn to nominate the candidate. At their convention, however, the Conservatives could not decide on a candidate. As a means of resolving the deadlock, party leaders decided to allow the Liberal Party to serve as umpire and make the final selection. The nominees not receiving the Liberals' support ran their own campaigns as splinter candidates.

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<sup>1</sup>The National Popular Alliance received 28 per cent of the vote in 1966, and the Revolutionary Liberal Movement polled 24 per cent in 1962. These were the best performances by third parties until 1970.



At first it appeared that, despite these divisions, the official candidate would win easily because he had the support of the Liberal and Conservative party leaderships. However, many people underestimated the strength of ANAPO. Under Rojas Pinilla, ANAPO campaigned for an end to the National Front as well as an end to government by the traditional parties. The margin of victory by the National Front candidate was so slim--1.5 per cent of the vote--that the government had to impose a state of siege and a curfew in order to maintain control over the situation. Thus the 1970 presidential election can be said to have produced a crisis situation because it was an extremely close one in which one nearly victorious candidate had advocated the end of traditional rule for Colombia.

The presidential campaign posed several questions dealing with the effect of the National Front on the two major political parties and the relationship between the elite and the counter-elite in Colombia. The elite in this study refers to the power structure of the national community. The elite occupies "those positions in society which are at the summits of the key social structures," or the higher positions in such areas as government, the economy, mass media, and others.<sup>2</sup> The counter-elite is that portion of the elite which has been denied a part in the government. The questions investigated in this thesis are:

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<sup>2</sup>Seymour Martin Lipset and Aldo Solari, eds., Elites in Latin America (New York, 1967), p. vii.

1. What effect has coalition government in Colombia had on the two party system and on third party movements?

2. What campaign style might political parties, accustomed to a monopoly of political power, use upon suddenly finding themselves threatened by another party?

3. How does the political elite in a country such as Colombia react to the challenge of a counter-elite in order to preserve its prearranged control over the country and to maintain its position of institutionalized power?

In order to answer the above questions, this thesis will test the following hypotheses:

1. In a system such as in Colombia where two political parties vie for power, then agree to form a coalition, the results tend to produce an increase in intra-party competition which creates a greater danger of a split in the party.

2. Because the coalition participants are accustomed to a monopoly of power, they tend not to perceive counter-elite challenges to be a threat, and this might induce the coalition to complacency before a challenge by a popular demagogue.

3. Because of this complacency, the political parties in Colombia behave as if the challenge did not exist, and they react to it, if at all, only at the latter stages of the campaign.

## B. Methodology and Data

The research method used in this thesis is the use of the case study. The 1970 presidential election is potentially a very important one for Colombia because of the crisis produced by it; however, it has been almost totally ignored by students of Colombian politics. As a result, an essentially descriptive study of the election is in order.

This does not mean that there will be no analysis of events nor an attempt to compare the 1970 election with other ones where it is relevant.

But, as indicated earlier, the scope of this thesis is largely limited to the following: first, to a detailed examination of only one election and an analysis of the techniques employed by the Colombian elite during the presidential election campaign of 1970; second, to the campaign styles of the various candidates in that election; third, to an analysis of the election returns; and, finally, to an evaluation of the effects of the National Front on the traditional elite himself.

Since the 1970 presidential election is not an isolated event, Chapter II deals with the aspects of party identification which affected the election campaign and its outcome. What conditions allowed Rojas Pinilla to build his political party from almost nothing into a national power? What effect did the nominating conventions have on the National Front's ability to wage a successful campaign? What were the major characteristics of the party system at the time of the election? To answer these questions the author has consulted various secondary sources in both English and Spanish. For materials on the party conventions he has turned principally to those newspapers listed on Page 7.

Chapter III is concerned with the election campaign from the conclusion of the nominating conventions to election day. The main purpose of this chapter is to indicate

patterns in the actions of various segments of the elite during the campaign and to deal with the issues presented in the contest. Information for this chapter comes almost exclusively from newspapers which have given detailed accounts of campaign activities. How did the various candidates organize their respective campaign efforts? To what immediate issues did the candidates address themselves during the campaign and did these change during the campaign? What was the position of government officials toward the campaign? Did they alter their attitudes toward it near the end? Finally, what kind of press coverage did the candidates receive and did it change in the later stages of the campaign?

Chapter IV deals with the election itself. Like the previous chapter, most of the information comes from the same newspapers. It considers the events of election day and its immediate aftermath as well as an analysis of the election data. These data are made available from two government sources given on Page 8. The principal purpose of this chapter is to determine the techniques used by the elite to handle the crisis resulting from the election and to determine who had voted for whom and why. What was the reaction of the people to the election returns? How did the government cope with the resulting popular reaction, and how effective were these measures? Employing the election data, what is the relationship between the degree of

urbanization and voting for a particular candidate? Were there any regional patterns in the voting? How did the National Front fare in areas of traditional support for the Liberal Party or for the Conservative Party? Also, how did the National Popular Alliance fare in these same areas?

The last chapter seeks to relate the previous analysis to the confrontation in the presidential election between the National Front and the ANAPO. The conclusions reached in the other chapters will be brought to bear on the central questions raised in this thesis.

The author has used both primary and secondary sources while conducting this research. Books and articles in both English and Spanish have been consulted. This thesis uses three types of primary sources, the most important of which are newspapers which have supplied eyewitness accounts and segments of speeches. The four most valuable for the research are: El Tiempo, El Siglo, El Colombiano, and La Prensa. La Prensa of Buenos Aires, Argentina, has good coverage of the election from the United Press and serves as an impartial, outside source. Another reason for selecting this newspaper is that it was readily available to the researcher. El Tiempo of Bogotá is one of the most important newspapers of the Liberal Party and enjoys much prestige in Colombia as well as some international recognition. El Siglo of Bogotá, although not as prestigious as El Tiempo, is one of the more important newspapers of the Conservative Party; however, this paper backed one of the splinter

candidates rather than the National Front nominee. To consult a Conservative newspaper supporting the National Front candidate, the researcher turned to El Colombiano of Medellín, which is one of the more important Conservative papers outside the capital city. Thus a balance is maintained by having a Liberal newspaper, a Conservative paper from a dissident faction, a Conservative newspaper supporting the National Front, and an impartial source. Unfortunately no newspaper from ANAPO is available. These newspapers have been consulted on a daily basis during the entire time of the nominating conventions, the campaign, and the post-election crisis. They were consulted for the campaign issues, campaign styles, the attitudes of various groups within the elite toward each other, and the attitudes taken by the newspapers to the candidates.

Another primary source is aggregate election data. These come from government agencies such as the Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil and the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística. The third primary source is personal observation. The author was present in Colombia during the election campaign and will add comments based on his own experiences and recollections of various aspects of the campaign.

### C. Literature Review

In conducting the above research, there were few secondary sources dealing with the 1970 presidential election, either in English or Spanish. Perhaps the best in English is Miles Williams' "El Frente Nacional: Colombia's Experiment in Controlled Democracy."<sup>3</sup> Williams is concerned with the overall aspects of the National Front, focusing principally on trends in voting. This work will be particularly valuable in Chapter IV. The author has provided some motivational studies of the electorate, and he shows some electoral trends between 1958 and 1970. However, Williams says almost nothing about the dynamics of the campaign and not anything concerning the crisis resulting from the election.

Saturnino Sepúlveda Niño, in his Elites colombianas en crisis: de partidos policlasistas a partidos monoclasistas, offers a study of the Colombian elite.<sup>4</sup> He does offer some analysis of the election results, which can be used in Chapter IV. Furthermore, Sepúlveda describes the campaign of each candidate in outline form. He touches briefly on the candidates' ideology, campaign style, and on the significance of their movements; but the author does not go into

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<sup>3</sup>Miles Williams, "El Frente Nacional: Colombia's Experiment in Controlled Democracy" (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1972).

<sup>4</sup>Saturnino Sepúlveda Niño, Elites colombianas en crisis: de partidos policlasistas a partidos monoclasistas (Bogotá, 1970).

much detail on any item. It should be emphasized that Sepúlveda writes from a very definite pro-ANAPO bias. This book is also basically descriptive rather than analytical.

There are several works in English and Spanish which deal with earlier periods of the National Front, thus providing background information and setting to the present study. These works are useful for Chapter II, since they were written before 1970. James Payne, in his Patterns of Conflict in Colombia, states that one of the greatest concerns of Colombians is their status in society.<sup>5</sup> Thus he argues that a politician is more concerned with the status received from holding a particular office than with being informed on the policy matters with which he is confronted in that office. Payne then shows the importance and the role of status in the political parties, the Congress, and the presidency. He is also concerned with conflicts within society, such as the civil war which raged in the 1940s and the 1950s.

Colombia: A Contemporary Political Survey, by John Martz, provides the reader with a history of Colombia from 1930 to 1962.<sup>6</sup> After an introduction to the Liberal reforms of the 1930s, Martz analyzes the Conservative governments of Mariano Ospina Pérez and Laureano Gómez as well as the civil

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<sup>5</sup>James Payne, Patterns of Conflict in Colombia (New Haven, 1968).

<sup>6</sup>John D. Martz, Colombia: A Contemporary Political Survey (Chapel Hill, 1962).



war which exploded at that time. He traces some of the policies of the Rojas Pinilla dictatorship, followed by the formation of the National Front. Finally he presents a discussion of the first presidency of the National Front under Alberto Lleras Camargo.

Probably the most important recent political study is Colombia: The Political Dimensions of Change, by Robert Dix.<sup>7</sup> Dix's basic concern is political modernization and how this process is at work in Colombia. He makes an analysis of political modernization and how it is enhanced or deterred by each political institution of the country: the government, political parties, interest groups, Church, etc.

Perhaps the best analytical work in Spanish is Tendencias de la participación electoral en Colombia 1935-1966, written by Anita Weiss.<sup>8</sup> Her principal contribution is the analysis of voting data for that period. Some of her conclusions are that voting participation increased before the National Front was formed and that it decreased afterwards. After 1958 she found that voter participation in congressional elections was higher than in presidential elections, probably due to greater intro-party competition at the congressional level. The remainder of her work deals with the political system.

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<sup>7</sup>Robert H. Dix, Colombia: The Political Dimensions of Change (New Haven, 1967).

<sup>8</sup>Anita Weiss, Tendencias de la participación electoral en Colombia 1935-1966 (Bogotá, 1968).

Eduardo Santa wrote an excellent work on political sociology in his Sociología política de Colombia.<sup>9</sup> He is basically concerned with the conflicts within the society, the struggle between the lower classes and the oligarchy. In his analysis he notes ten fissures in Colombian society which have a bearing on the current conflicts, one of which is the distribution of the national income among a very few wealthy individuals. He asserts that violence exists because the political structures of the system are in a state of crisis. At the bottom of it are economic problems, which have been tolerated by the power class only because it has not wanted to make the necessary sacrifices to fight.

#### D. Defense and Limitations of Study

A study of this kind has several advantages as well as disadvantages. One advantage enjoyed by this author is his familiarity with Colombia as well as his on-the-scene observations of the 1970 election campaign. A second advantage for this study is its comprehensiveness. The author has employed as many sources, both in English and in Spanish, as possible in the research. There are, however, two limitations to the study which must be noted. One is that the thesis involves only an isolated case study, namely that of one election in only one country. Thus, no conclusive generalizations can come from the research, only

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<sup>9</sup>Eduardo Santa, Sociología política de Colombia (Bogotá, 1964).

suggestions for further research and testing. A second limitation is the heavy reliance on aggregate election data, since survey data are not available in great quantities. As a result, few statements can be made concerning the individual voter, only about groups or clusters of voters. The statistics are not perfectly accurate, as is true on most electoral information published in Latin America; however, they should be fairly reliable.

As stated above, this thesis is basically descriptive although it will analyze events as well. It will attempt to determine the meaning of the election to Colombian politics and to show what effect the election had on future politics, the coalition, and on campaign styles. Thus, rather than formulating a coalition model to apply to the case at hand, the thesis develops a case study which could be used by another researcher to determine the feasibility of his model.

The election under study is important to Colombian politics for at least two reasons. It was the last election held under the National Front guidelines. Hence, the new president was to play a decisive role in dissolving the Front and in writing new rules for free competitive elections in 1974. The election is also important because it divided the country almost in equal halves. It seems that a sizeable percentage of the people was dissatisfied with the policies of the National Front and demanded changes which the government had failed to introduce.

The election is also significant for the comparative study of campaigns. Although there are many examples of coalition governments in the world, the National Front was a uniquely Colombian experiment. No other country has carried the concept of institutionalized coalitions so far as the National Front did. This gives the political scientist the opportunity to study two political parties, normally fighting each other, cooperating for the same goal. It is also interesting to study the election because, for the first time in many years, a force beyond the control of the coalition participants entered the scene as a strong challenger to their control over the government. Thus the traditional leaders were compelled to combat this intruder in order to preserve their status and power.

## CHAPTER II

### PRELUDE TO THE CAMPAIGN

The 1970 presidential election can be viewed as the culmination of many problems associated with coalition government in Colombia. This chapter deals with those characteristics of Colombian political parties and those historical events which had a direct impact on the election and its outcome. This chapter also seeks to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of coalition government under the National Front. Finally, it is concerned with the 1969 nominating conventions.

#### A. Colombian Political Parties

One of the more outstanding characteristics of Colombian politics is that it has a well developed two-party system. Colombia is unique in Latin America in that its major parties had been the predominant ones since their formation in the mid 1800s. These two political parties, the Liberal and the Conservative, display many characteristics of parties in the United States. Neither party is highly disciplined. This means that almost no one is denied party membership because he disagrees with or votes against

the party's position on an issue.<sup>1</sup> The Liberals and the Conservatives do not represent any one social class. One finds members of all social classes in both parties; however, both parties appeal for lower class support.<sup>2</sup> The third similarity between the Colombian and United States parties is that they are non-ideological and pragmatic.<sup>3</sup> They are well organized for an election campaign, but subsequently their organization weakens until the next election. It is not uncommon to find a member of the Liberal Party having the same ideological orientation as a member of the Conservative Party and vice versa. However, each party does have a general policy orientation. The Conservatives believe in the importance of the Catholic Church in politics and in a federal system of government. The Liberals, on the other hand, believe in a strict separation of Church and State and in a centralized form of government. The Conservatives are strongest in the rural areas and the Liberals draw their main support from the urban centers.

However, there is at least one important difference between the political parties in Colombia and the United

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<sup>1</sup>Hugo Escobar Sierra, "Organización interna de los partidos," in Coloquios de la Universidad Externado de Colombia, Los Partidos Políticos (Bogotá, 1968), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Eduardo Santa, "Las actuales estructuras políticas," in Coloquios de la Universidad Externado de Colombia, Los Partidos Políticos (Bogotá, 1970), p. 66.

<sup>3</sup>Ben G. Burnett, "The Recent Colombian Party System: Its Organization and Procedure" (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1957), p. 149.

States. That is, Colombians have a strong emotional tie to their respective parties. To vote for the opposition party rarely happens, and such an act would place the individual in public disgrace among his friends. It is a family tradition to belong to one political party or the other, and to change parties would be the same as committing an act of treason against one's friends.<sup>4</sup> The tie between the individual and his party is thus more emotional than intellectual. Although the same could be said of the United States, the principal difference is one of degree. Richard Weinert relates the following incident which illustrates the extremes to which some Colombians go in order to manifest their loyalty to parties. This incident occurred to the daughter of a Conservative Party leader in the department of Tolima, west of Bogotá:

As a child in the 1930s, she accidentally intruded on a conference her father was holding with two peasants. Disconcerted at the consternation her intrusion had caused, she later asked her father what she had done. He explained that her dress contained a red border on the neckline. Red is the color of the Liberal Party and the peasants could not fathom why her father permitted her to wear it.<sup>5</sup>

In addition The Washington Post, in an article on Catholicism in Colombia, reported incidents of excommunication for people having read El Tiempo, the leading Liberal newspaper. When the Conservatives were in power, attendance at Liberal

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<sup>4</sup>Santa, "Las actuales estructuras políticas," p. 69.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Weinert, "Political Modernization in Columbia" (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1957), p. 52.

Party rallies was something that one mentioned in confessions.<sup>6</sup>

This rigidity in political loyalties has led to frequent armed conflicts between the partisans of the two parties. The most recent and most violent of them, called La Violencia, or Violent Era, began in 1945 and lasted until the 1960s.<sup>7</sup> It is not the purpose of this thesis to analyze the Violent Era in detail since this is adequately done elsewhere in the literature.<sup>8</sup> Suffice it to say that this period affected almost every section of the country and involved all classes of society. The most outstanding characteristic of the Violent Era was its bloodthirstiness and butchery; stories of genocide, rape, and torture were quite common. Approximately 200,000 persons lost their lives as Conservatives fought Liberals and Liberals fought Conservatives. By 1953 the fighting had become so intense that the Conservative government could no longer control the situation. Because of this and other reasons, General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla took over the government. This was the first time that the military had taken over the national

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<sup>6</sup>The Washington Post (July 11, 1975), p. C4.

<sup>7</sup>Some authors contend that the Violent Era still continues; however, after the early 1960s it was essentially Castro-like guerrillas advocating one of the versions of Communist doctrine.

<sup>8</sup>See previous examples by Dix, Martz, and Payne; also Vernon Fluharty, Dance of the Millions: Military Rule and Social Revolution in Columbia 1930-1956 (Pittsburgh, 1957).



government in this century.<sup>9</sup>

Although the rise of General Rojas to power was welcomed by both Liberal and Conservative parties, he soon fell into disfavor. At first violence quieted down, but after a year of failure at solid reforms it began anew and with even greater intensity. Rojas was further discredited by his inability to manage the economy, and he made frequent tactical blunders in operating the government, such as his attempt to undermine the traditional political parties. He created a Third Force to replace the Liberal and Conservative parties. The movement never succeeded, partially due to inadequate leadership.

By 1957 the leader of the Conservative Party, Laureano Gómez, who was living in Spain, and the Liberal Party leader, Alberto Lleras Camargo, realized that if their respective parties were to survive as effective political institutions, they would have to do something to ease the competition between the parties, at least for a while, since the leaders felt that the intense competition was the source of their difficulties. The solution devised for their problem was not unusual for Colombia, although the extent to which they carried it was certainly unique. The formulation of a coalition government had been tried many times in the past, most recently in the late 1940s with the National Union and previously under President Olaya Herrera in 1930-1934. Thus,

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<sup>9</sup>For a discussion of the Rojas Pinilla dictatorship, consult the references in the above footnote.

there were many precedents for the two major parties to act together in times of crisis.<sup>10</sup>

The basic purpose of the National Front was to restore domestic political peace by temporarily abating competition between the two parties. The party leaders hoped that the National Front would undo all the harm done by the Violent Era and the Rojas dictatorship.<sup>11</sup> Many Colombians felt that the mere restoration of civilian government would not be a real solution to the country's difficulties, nor would the restoration of peace succeed overnight. But without political peace the country could not progress in other areas. The time spent with the National Front would give the country a chance to perfect its democratic processes. President Alberto Lleras Camargo elaborated on the basic goals of the National Front in a speech to Congress upon assuming the presidency in 1958. He said:

The country is facing many difficulties. It is being undermined by the Violent Era, weakened by prejudices and sectarian passions, and ruined by the government's inability to carry out social programs. Furthermore the country has lost the capability to pay for essential imports, is unable to increase domestic production fast enough to meet debts in foreign exchange because coffee prices can be maintained only by artificial means due to overproduction. Therefore it is necessary to reestablish peace; some way to reach an equilibrium among the following: social classes, order and leadership in government, foreign credit, and a reasonable cost of living. All this must be done without destroying the economic development which is just beginning.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Weiss, p. 45.

<sup>11</sup>Bernardo Gaitán Mahecha, Misión histórica del Frente Nacional; de la violencia a la democracia (Bogotá, 1966), p. 43.

<sup>12</sup>Alberto Lleras Camargo, El Primer gobierno del Frente Nacional (Bogotá, 1960), p. 66.

By creating an atmosphere without underhanded dealings we can create formulas for pacification and for the reestablishment of the old national virtues which are expressed in the idea of joint government and in the temporary ending of competition for elective offices. The main explanation for this joint government is its necessity because it is more important that the Republic survive and not fall to its ruin by the hand of one of its political parties.<sup>13</sup>

By forming the National Front the leaders of the political parties made two important assumptions about their respective parties. First, they believed that the two traditional parties were strong enough to survive the prescribed sixteen years of noncompetitive elections. Second, they believed that the Liberals and the Conservatives could maintain their internal cohesion, thus avoiding internal power struggles and factionalism.<sup>14</sup>

The basic organization of the National Front contained three items.<sup>15</sup> First was the concept of alternation. This meant that the presidency would alternate between the Liberal and Conservative parties. Thus in 1958 the president was a Liberal, in 1962 the president was a Conservative, and so on until the 1974 election. The second basic principle was parity between the parties. All seats in the national and local legislatures were divided evenly between the Liberals and the Conservatives. This equal division also applied to cabinet posts and to the departmental, or

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>14</sup>Williams, p. 137.

<sup>15</sup>Dix, p. 136.

regional, governors. The third principle was the requirement of a two-thirds vote to pass legislation in Congress. This measure tried to create greater unity between the parties, but it soon proved to be an impractical measure and was changed to only a simple majority.

Thus Colombia entered a period of non-competitive elections after a long history of elections in which both parties had parti-candidates. People have traditionally felt very strongly about their political affiliations. Unfortunately, this had led to a major civil war and a military dictatorship. As a result, the political leaders attempted to restore order by temporarily playing down the rivalry between the parties through the National Front.

#### B. Strengths and Weaknesses of the National Front

The National Front government had several strengths and weaknesses. Probably the greatest strength of the coalition was that it was able to accomplish the basic goal it set out to do: the restoration of domestic peace in Colombia. What fighting remained in the 1960s was essentially Communist oriented and concentrated in isolated areas.<sup>16</sup> The elite was able to remove some of the causes for the Violent Era with a series of moves and by coordinating efforts of the government,

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<sup>16</sup>Norman A. Bailey, "La Violencia in Colombia," Journal of Inter-American Studies, IX, No. 4 (October, 1967), p. 568.

armed forces, and Church. Some examples of actions taken included the government's offer of complete amnesty to those guerrillas who would surrender their arms and take up a peaceful occupation. One of the programs established to encourage a person to seek amnesty was the Office of Rehabilitation which, among other things, loaned money to farmers to establish themselves. It also started public works to create new jobs. The Church assisted the pacification program by sending missions to areas hard hit by the Violent Era. The armed forces also aided the government by becoming better trained in methods used thwarting guerrilla operations.<sup>17</sup>

A second strength of the National Front was that its presidential nominees received the highest margins of support of any presidential elections this century in which both major political parties actively participated. This indicated that a greater number of people were supporting, or at least not opposing, the National Front than had backed previous presidential candidates who competed for the office. There was less opposition and harrassment of presidential policies.

In the elections held in 1958, 1962, and 1966, the National Front candidates won 80 per cent, 62 per cent, and 71 per cent of the vote respectively. Table I shows the voting results of the elections between 1918 and 1949, the

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<sup>17</sup>Dix, p. 378.

TABLE I  
COMPETITION BETWEEN THE PARTIES

Year	Candidate	Party Affiliation	Per Cent of Vote
1949	Laureano Gómez	Conservative	99.9
	Others		00.0
1946	Mariano Ospina Pérez	Conservative	41.4
	Gabriel Turbay	Liberal	32.3
	Jorge E. Gaitan	Liberal	26.3
1942	Alfonso López	Liberal	58.7
	Carlos Arango Velez	Conservative	41.4
1938	Eduardo Santos	Liberal	99.9
	Others		00.0
1934	Alfonso López	Liberal	99.6
	Others		00.7
1930	Enrique Olaya H.	Liberal	44.9
	Guillermo Valencia	Conservative	29.2
	Alfredo Vásquez C.	Conservative	25.9
	Others		00.1
1926	Miguel Abadía Méndez	Conservative	99.9
	Others		00.1
1922	Pedro Nel Ospina	Conservative	61.7
	Benjamin Herrera	Liberal	38.2
	Others		00.0
1918	Marco Fidel Suárez	Conservative	54.0
	Guillermo Valencia		40.0
	J. M. Lombara Barrenecho		6.0
	Others		00.0

Source: Registraduría Nacional de Estadística.

last election before the National Front. In all competitive elections, the victorious candidates never received a greater percentage of the vote than the winners under the National Front. The only exceptions occurred in 1926, 1934, 1938, and 1948, which were in essence non-competitive elections. In these instances the party out of power believed itself sufficiently intimidated to be unable to campaign effectively. For example, the party subjected to harrassment at their rallies or to raids on their headquarters refused to add legitimacy to the election by their participation.<sup>18</sup>

A third strength of the coalition was that the members of both political parties had something at stake in the government. This strength was established by the constitutional provision that only half of the cabinet and half of the Congress could be a member of the president's own party. This assured that the opposition party would be consulted on governmental decisions. For example, a Liberal president would rely on a Conservative cabinet member for assistance in making a policy decision. This bipartisan arrangement made it impossible for one political party to make an all-out attack on the government, as had been customary in the past. Under the National Front each party had some role in formulating government decisions.

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<sup>18</sup>See previous reference to John Martz for a discussion of harrassment tactics, especially those employed in the 1948 election.

However, the National Front did have some weaknesses. One of these was the consequence of alternating the presidency between the Liberals and the Conservatives. The institutionalization, or "freezing" of electoral competition resulted in a decline in popular participation at the polls when compared with the voter turnout for the 1957 plebiscite to approve the National Front.<sup>19</sup> This decline could have been intended by the organizers of the National Front to reduce competition between the parties. This would have been a strength of the Front if it had not faced serious outside opposition. Surveys made in 1970 indicated popular dissatisfaction with the National Front. For example, in Cali 47 per cent of the people indicated discontent with the system or the candidate as reasons for not voting in the election.<sup>20</sup> This is confirmed by Miles Williams in a national study. He reported in a survey conducted in 1964 by Pittsburgh University that there was a high degree of dissatisfaction with the National Front, but that many voters felt that the general situation would improve. However, years later Williams found that the dissatisfaction was taking the form of support to organizations beyond the control of the traditional political parties.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Weiss, pp. 68-69.

<sup>20</sup>Judith DeCampos and John F. McCamant, "Colombia política 1971," Boletín Mensual de Estadística, DANE No. 242 (September, 1971), p. 83.

<sup>21</sup>Williams, p. 141.



Since the selection of National Front candidates was made by the leadership of the political parties and ratified by the national conventions, many voters felt that the candidate was being imposed on them. Even if they voted for an "illegal" candidate, that is, one running outside the National Front guidelines, they knew in advance that the official candidate would win easily. Table II shows this decline in popular participation. Even President Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966-1970) did not get as much support as shown in the congressional elections before the National Front was created.

A second weakness of the National Front was that it was unable to resolve some of the communication problems which had afflicted the political parties previously. Communication here refers to the passing of information between various levels within the political party. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives had taken great care in keeping their respective followers and local organizations informed on party positions and policies. However, this communication was essentially in one direction. The leader speaking to the masses was the most common method of communication in an attempt either to educate the public or to mobilize the people into supporting his program. This was a carry-over from the time when politics was the active concern of relatively few people. This means that the party leaders made little effort to provide effective means of communication from the masses to the top leadership. In a survey

TABLE II  
 PER CENT OF THOSE REGISTERED ACTUALLY VOTING  
 IN ELECTIONS, 1946-1966

Election	Number of Voters	Eligible Voters	% Voting of Those Eligible
May 1946 (presidential)	1,366,272	2,450,696	56
March 1947 (Chamber)	1,472,689	2,613,686	56
June 1949 (Chamber)	1,719,440	2,773,804	62
Nov. 1949 (presidential)	1,140,646	2,856,339	40
Dec. 1957 (plebiscite)	4,397,090	6,080,342	72
March 1958 (Chamber)	3,693,939	5,365,191	69
May 1958 (presidential)	3,108,567	5,365,191	58
March 1960 (Chamber)	2,542,651	4,397,541	58
March 1962 (Chamber)	3,090,203	5,338,868	58
May 1962 (presidential)	2,634,840	5,404,765	49
March 1964 (Chamber)	2,261,190	6,135,980	37
March 1966 (Chamber)	2,843,450	7,126,980	40 (est.)
March 1966 (presidential)	2,593,705	7,126,980	36 (est.)

Source: Robert H. Dix, Colombia: The Political Dimensions of Change (New Haven, 1967), p. 162.

conducted by Miles Williams, it was reported that this lack of communication was the most serious defect Colombians found in their political parties. However, among politicians the response was somewhat different. Many are aware that the communication gap does exist, but they feel that they are not a part of it. Half of the politicians surveyed stated they communicated frequently with the public, but Williams concludes that, although they do communicate with the electorate, they may not always contact a good cross section of it.<sup>22</sup>

A third weakness of the National Front was that it encouraged factionalism within the parties and the formation of third parties. These two factors helped undermine the invincibility of the National Front presidential candidates. These weaknesses almost caused the collapse of the National Front. The Liberal and Conservative parties have had the political arena almost exclusively to themselves since their creation in the eighteenth century. No other major political movement challenged them, if one excludes the military. However, both parties have traditionally been subject to factionalism. This seems to occur after one party had been in power for some time, and two popular personages vied for the presidency, thus causing a split in party ranks and finally its fall from power. The basis for this factionalism was usually personality clashes or power struggles

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 159-162.

rather than based on ideological motives.

It was the Liberal Party which split first after the formation of the National Front. However, the split did not last long. In 1959 Alfonso López Michelson broke away from the Liberals and formed the Movimiento Revolucionario Liberal (MRL), or Revolutionary Liberal Movement. Apparently this new party did not antagonize the regulars of the Liberal Party because the MRL was accepted back into the party in 1966, and López Michelson is currently the president of Colombia (1974-1978) as a Liberal.

Under the National Front the Conservative Party did not give any evidence of new factionalism until 1969. Before the National Front, the Conservatives were divided between Mariano Ospina Pérez and Laureano Gómez, both of whom had been presidents. In the 1958 congressional elections the followers of Gómez suffered a major defeat which resulted in the dominance of the Ospina faction. This situation remained until the 1969 nominating convention. These new factions will be discussed in the next section.

The only third political party of significance created during the National Front era is the National Popular Alliance (ANAPO). Although it was a separate party, it could not completely divorce itself from the influence of the traditional parties. This can be seen in its organization into liberal and conservative wings.<sup>23</sup> A second

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<sup>23</sup>Sepúlveda Niño, p. 74.

indicator is that, when the National Front called for a Conservative candidate, Rojas Pinilla, who had Conservative leanings, sought the nomination. When the National Front required a Liberal candidate, ANAPO nominated José Jaramillo Giraldo, who had previously been a member of the Liberal Party.<sup>24</sup>

In regard to the organization and the internal dynamics of ANAPO, little has been written. Most likely it is organized like other personalist parties in Latin America. Unlike most other splinter parties, ANAPO was organized on a national basis, campaigning in almost every department and territory. One advantage ANAPO had over the traditional parties was its organization at the local level, an area where Liberal and Conservative organizations are almost nonexistent.<sup>25</sup> In the 1970 election ANAPO showed great organizational skills and maintained constant contact with the people with its promise of reforms once it assumed power. In 1967 Robert Dix published the following concerning ANAPO:

In has described itself as 'a Christian and nationalist movement which seeks the union of the Liberal and Conservative populace with the aim of attaining power in order to put it at the service of the people . . .'. The emphasis instead is on a 'revolution' against the swindlers, against the empresarios of hate, against the corrupt politicians, against the sordid bosses, against the

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<sup>24</sup>Dix, p. 145.

<sup>25</sup>Williams, p. 157.

traitorous intellectuals, against the pharisees of democracy, against the exporters of capital to Swiss and North American banks, against the real promoters of violence.<sup>26</sup>

The National Front thus headed to its final presidential election with both some successes to its credit and some failures as well. Its primary success was that it did bring political peace to Colombia after nearly twenty years of fighting. However, one aspect of its success, that of non-competitive presidential elections, tended to foment factionalism and third parties, movements which almost led to the collapse of the National Front.

C. The Politics of the 1969 Conservative  
Party Convention: A Reaffirmation of  
Instability in the Colombian  
Coalition?

Despite the aforementioned weaknesses of the National Front, it probably would have easily won the 1970 election had it not been for the division within the Conservative Party during its nominating convention, held on November 5, 1969. This could be predicted, since the National Front had never received less than 62 per cent of the vote and no single opposition candidate had won more than 29 per cent.

There were six persons seeking the Conservative nomination for president in 1970; Misael Pastrana Borrero, José

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<sup>26</sup>Dix, p. 283.

Elías del Hierro, Belisario Betancur, Evaristo Sourdís, Hernán Jaramillo Ocampo, and Castor Jaramillo Arruba. The Conservative Party suffered its first division even before the convention began, with the defection of Belisario Betancur. After pre-convention campaigning, it appeared that Pastrana Borrero would receive the nomination because he had the support of party chief Ospina Pérez and because he was able to get the backing of many prominent Liberals. Thus it appeared to Betancur that the convention would merely ratify Pastrana's nomination and leave him out of contention. He decided to hold his own convention, arguing that the upcoming Conservative convention did not really represent the party but only the will of Ospina Pérez.<sup>27</sup> He claimed that his convention was more genuinely representative of the Conservative Party. It was this claim on which he built the legitimacy of his own campaign for the presidency.

Despite this defection, the Conservative Party's convention was held as scheduled. Most observers felt that there would be no difficulty in selecting a candidate. Even Evaristo Sourdís agreed that "for all practical purposes a divided convention could occur only in an extremely remote instance."<sup>28</sup> Two days prior to the convention Pastrana felt that he was very close to the nomination, claiming a

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<sup>27</sup> Sepúlveda Niño, p. 82.

<sup>28</sup> El Tiempo (September 1, 1969), p. 6.

commitment of 320 votes of a possible 600.<sup>29</sup> (Rules of the Conservative Party required the nominee to receive two-thirds of the votes.)

The convention began on November 5, 1969, in a carnival mood. The usual bands, streamers, and rallies were quite in evidence several hours before the meeting began. Most people expected the rapid nomination of Pastrana Borrero as the next president. However, the unexpected happened. The four candidates--Evaristo Sourdís, José Elías del Hierro, Hernán Jaramillo Ocampo, and Castor Jaramillo Arruba--believed that, if they continued with their separate campaigns, Pastrana would win the nomination easily. However, if they banded together, there was a good chance that the Pastrana campaign could be stopped. Thus they formed an alliance (sindicato de presidenciables) under their strongest member, Evaristo Sourdís. One likely consequence, if they were successful, would be the defeat of party chief Ospina Pérez and his candidate. The defeat of these two men could have meant the alliance's control over the Conservative Party. Thus the Conservative Party convention can be studied as a double power struggle: one for the presidential nomination and the other for the control of the Conservative Party. On one side was party leader Ospina Pérez and his candidate Pastrana Borrero, and on the other side was Alvaro Gómez Hurtado, who was appointed spokesman for the alliance,

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 1.



and his candidate Evaristo Sourdís.

The outcome of this confrontation was without precedent in the history of the Conservative Party. This was the first time that so many persons had sought the nomination.<sup>30</sup> The relative strength of both sides was not evident until after the first ballot in which, surprising most observers, Sourdís received more votes than did the heavily-favored Pastrana. Unfortunately, all convention balloting was done in secret so no analysis of the voting is possible. Both sides began to maneuver for a stronger position. Gómez Hurtado emphasized the need for unity and for a single candidate. He indicated that all opponents of Pastrana had banded together behind Sourdís.<sup>31</sup> El Tiempo editorially defended Pastrana by deploring the divisions of the Conservatives and expressed a strong dislike for the alliance which, it felt, really stood for nothing except to stop Pastrana.<sup>32</sup>

The second ballot, cast the next day, produced even greater confusion: both Pastrana and Sourdís received the same number of votes.<sup>33</sup> The carnival mood at the start of the convention had been replaced by heated debate and much name calling. Never before had two candidates tied in a

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<sup>30</sup>El Colombiano (November 5, 1969), p. 1.

<sup>31</sup>El Tiempo (November 6, 1969), p. 1.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>33</sup>El Tiempo (November 7, 1969), p. 1.

convention.<sup>34</sup> The party leadership was in a quandary on how to handle this delicate situation. Party statutes called for a third ballot; however, many people were convinced that it would not produce a nominee.<sup>35</sup> Thus Ospina Pérez decided not to call for the third ballot. This act would eventually serve to legitimize Sourdís' own campaign in view of the fact that he had received more votes than Pastrana on the first ballot and that the party leader never called for the third ballot as required by the party statutes.

In place of the third ballot the convention delegates authorized the leaders of the two main factions to take any measure they felt necessary to break the deadlock.<sup>36</sup> However, Gómez Hurtado refused to be part of this maneuver. It is possible that he did not want to risk his prestige at this time against Ospina Pérez.<sup>37</sup> Instead he called on José Elías del Hierro, one of the alliance members, to represent the faction. At first it appeared that Ospina Pérez and del Hierro could arrive at a compromise. Ospina offered to present the names of both Pastrana and Sourdís to the Liberal convention and let them decide. Del Hierro countered with the proposal that the two leading candidates step aside

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> El Colombiano (November 7, 1969), p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> La Prensa (November 9, 1969), p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Gómez Hurtado did receive his party's nomination for the presidency in 1974, in a losing contest against Alfonso López Michelson.

and the convention be allowed to pick another candidate.<sup>38</sup>

However, the faction leaders quickly fell into disagreement. Ospina rejected the alliance's proposal, arguing that the two front runners were excellent candidates who should not be denied the presidency because of internal party squabbles. Del Hierro rejected Ospina's plan by pointing out that the National Front agreement stipulated that for 1970 only the Conservative Party was authorized to make the nomination, and this meant that the Liberal Party was to play no active part in the decision.<sup>39</sup> The Liberal Party also refused to be drawn into this factional fight. They feared that their own party would become beset by factionalism if they tried to settle the Conservatives' problems.<sup>40</sup> The situation became even more clouded on November 9, when Sourdís threatened to run as an "independent" Conservative candidate if he did not receive the party's nomination.<sup>41</sup>

After three days of discussions between Ospina and del Hierro, an impasse had been reached. Negotiations were broken off and a waiting period began in order to see which side would give in first. With time the alliance's position began to weaken and the Liberals became more receptive to

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<sup>38</sup> El Tiempo (November 10, 1969), p. 7.

<sup>39</sup> El Colombiano (November 10, 1969), p. 25.

<sup>40</sup> El Tiempo (November 10, 1969), p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> El Tiempo (November 9, 1969), p. 1.

Ospina Pérez' plan. Probably the basic weakness of the alliance was its negative program. It never presented what it stood for, only what it was against: Pastrana's candidacy. The Liberal Party agreed to settle the nomination for fear if they did not it would produce public uncertainty and possible chaos.<sup>42</sup>

With the collapse of the alliance's position, the candidates turned to the Liberal Party for support. However, in this contest Pastrana was the clear favorite. Even before the convention, the head of the Liberal Party, Augusto Espinosa Valderrama, stated that Pastrana was the candidate which represented the widest spectrum of society: farmers, workers, middle class, and upper class.<sup>43</sup> Pastrana offered many assurances to the Liberal Party that he would execute faithfully the precepts set forth under the National Front and not try to undermine the strength of the Liberal Party:

The candidate of the National Front cannot be chosen by ad hoc Conservative conventions nor can or should the candidate seek the support of the Liberal Party by trying to avoid the Liberal convention, intending to fight it . . . . I am not and I will not be a candidate until my name has received the official approval of the Liberal Party.<sup>44</sup>

Although the names of Evaristo Sourdís and Belisario Betancur were presented to the Liberal convention, they

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<sup>42</sup> El Tiempo (November 22, 1969), p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> El Tiempo (September 11, 1969), p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> El Tiempo (November 21, 1969), p. 1.

withdrew from consideration.<sup>45</sup> They did not wish to compete for the nomination at a convention in which the outcome would be obviously against them. They wanted to preserve the legitimacy of their separate campaigns which they had already initiated. Sourdís cited some "irregularities" in the Liberal convention as the reason for withdrawing from consideration.<sup>46</sup>

The actions of the Liberal Party in face of the crisis in the Conservative convention may give one clue that the National Front has lessened the animosity between the two parties' leaderships. This situation might have offered the Liberals an excellent chance to put the Conservative Party in complete disarray and maybe even make it an ineffective organization for several years in the future. Throughout the struggle, however, the Liberal leaders were very careful not to get involved. When it finally decided to intercede, it did so in support of the Conservative party leader and not of the dissident faction. If the Liberals had supported the alliance, it probably would have meant the fall of Ospina Pérez as head of the Conservative Party. In choosing the National Front candidate the Liberals considered the following: the national interest, the interest and security of the Liberal Party, and the attitudes of the candidates

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<sup>45</sup>El Tiempo (December 3, 1969), p. 1.

<sup>46</sup>El Colombiano (December 4, 1969), p. 23.

toward unity and autonomy of the Liberal Party.<sup>47</sup> Thus on December 5, 1969, one month after the Conservative convention first met, the Liberals approved the nomination of Misael Pastrana Borrero for president. The convention vote was: Pastrana 512, Betancur 10, Sourdís 2, and 22 votes were blank.<sup>48</sup>

After receiving the nomination, Pastrana Borrero tried to reunite the Conservative Party under his leadership. He stated:

My government will be a national one, in the exact sense of the word, with each party having equal representation and equal power . . . it will undertake a program of development which will benefit all regions of the country . . . . This will be true development, the benefits of which will be properly distributed to all Colombians.<sup>49</sup>

However, all such attempts at party unification were unsuccessful. The other Conservative candidates were already too committed to their own campaigns to stop without losing prestige.

Despite even these divisions it seemed that the National Front was relatively secure in getting its candidate elected. The only challenger, Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, did not appear to be strong enough to challenge Pastrana. The author recalls a United States embassy briefing he attended when he just arrived in Colombia, April, 1969. The political

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<sup>47</sup>El Tiempo (November 22, 1969), p. 1.

<sup>48</sup>El Tiempo (November 22, 1969), p. 1.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

officer said that Rojas Pinilla did not have a chance in the coming elections.

#### D. Conclusions

The stage was now set for the campaign to determine who would be President of Colombia for the period 1970-1974. This chapter has attempted to give some of the background of this election. Colombians have always had a very strong feeling toward their respective political party which, unfortunately, has led to several civil wars. The Violent Era, the most severe of these, led to a military dictatorship which openly challenged the existence of both political parties. Thus the National Front was created as a means of political survival for the parties. This form of government had several advantages as well as disadvantages. It is interesting to note that the National Front ended competitive presidential elections but, as a result, created voter apathy. The latter, plus the factionalism experienced in the Conservative nominating convention, led to the near collapse of the National Front.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CAMPAIGN

This chapter is concerned with the dynamics of the campaign from its beginning to election day. The basic argument of the chapter is twofold. First, the campaign was essentially a struggle between Pastrana and Rojas with the two splinter candidates being virtually ignored by them. Second, the Pastrana campaign had to adapt itself to two different styles as a result of the effectiveness of Rojas Pinilla in gaining supporters. The first style, which predominated from the beginning until early March, 1970, was very similar to a campaign as found in a one-party nation like Mexico, Japan, or India. In such a campaign the political party has a monopoly of power and there are no serious rivals for political offices. Thus the political party can ignore, for the most part, any claims made by the minor parties and many times even the existence of their candidates. The electoral campaign becomes more of an opportunity for the candidate to explain his ideas to the people and to travel around the country to get a firsthand view of the problems he will be facing in office. It is also a chance for the local political leaders to communicate directly with the person who is going to assume the political office.



The second campaign style used by Pastrana, which continued until the election, was closer to a campaign as found in a multi-party system. Such a campaign is characterized by the interplay of two or more candidates who take note of each other's existence. Not only do they attempt to present a program, but they also try to undermine the strengths of the opponents. This phase of Pastrana's campaign is dominated by attempts to undermine the campaign of Rojas Pinilla. While this style became dominant in early March, 1970, some traces of the previous style, principally that of spreading information, continued.

Most of the information for this chapter comes from the newspapers mentioned in Chapter I. Newspapers represent the only effective means of reaching large numbers of voters in Colombia. This is true basically because of the limitations on their principal rivals, radio and television. Television in Colombia is relatively limited. It is a government controlled monopoly which operates one channel for entertainment programs and another, which began in 1970, for educational programs. It is the government's policy to allow no advertisements on television, either commercial or political. The only political information made available through television were two half-hour presentations by each candidate of their platforms. The use of television for campaigning is further limited by the high price of television sets, which draw a high import tax. The main limitation to the use of radio for campaign purposes is the mountainous terrain of

Colombia. Most stations cannot be heard very far from the town where the transmitter is located. Thus, despite the high illiteracy rate in Colombia, newspapers remain the most important mass medium for a candidate to reach his audience. The importance of newspapers in campaigns is also confirmed by the conclusion reached by Ben G. Burnett who studied Colombian political parties in the 1950s. He said ". . . newspapers are among the most influential organs of political expression."<sup>1</sup>

Each of the candidates received support from newspapers. El Tiempo and El Colombiano were the principal backers of Pastrana. Coverage in these papers was completely favorable to their own candidate and unfavorable to the others.<sup>2</sup> Sourdís and Betancur were largely ignored, but the few articles that were printed were either favorable or only terse descriptions. In the beginning these newspapers ignored Rojas Pinilla, then later heaped abuse on him during the last month of the campaign. El Siglo was the principal backer of Evaristo Sourdís. All articles were either favorable for Sourdís or unfavorable for Pastrana. The other candidates were largely ignored.<sup>3</sup> Rojas Pinilla operated his own private newspaper, Alerta, to support his own candidacy; however, no copies of this paper were available to the

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<sup>1</sup>Burnett, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup>El Tiempo had an estimated circulation of 250,000 in 1968 and El Colombiano had a circulation of 78,000 in 1968.

<sup>3</sup>El Siglo had an estimated circulation of 65,000 in 1968.

author. The author is unaware, either through research or by having been in Colombia during the campaign, of any newspaper which wholly supported the Betancur campaign.

The campaigns of all the candidates were generally organized along the same lines. Since the National Front required that the Liberal and Conservative parties work together, each candidate established a Liberal and a Conservative wing to their movement, even Rojas Pinilla. The candidates tried to get as many nationally prominent persons as possible to head their campaigns; however, Pastrana was the only one successful in this. Rojas Pinilla was the only famous person in his movement, Betancur received support from former president Guillermo León Valencia, and Sourdís lacked the support of any nationally prominent person.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into sections considering each candidate separately. The two splinter candidates are analyzed first, then the first phase of Pastrana's campaign, followed by Rojas Pinilla's campaign, and finally the second phase of the Pastrana campaign.

#### A. The Sourdís Campaign

The presidential campaign of Evaristo Sourdís Juliao did not begin until the meetings of the Conservative Party's convention. Since the candidacy was proposed mainly in reaction to Pastrana Borrero, it was the most poorly organized of the four candidates. The campaign also suffered from the lack of skilled leadership. Because of this,

Sourdís concentrated most of his efforts in the departments along the Caribbean coast. He had strong appeal to voters in this area because he was born in a small town near Barranquilla. He also played on the fact that many people living along the coast felt that their region had been neglected by the central government in Bogotá.

The main support Sourdís had enjoyed during the nominating convention disappeared soon afterwards. The "alliance" was organized only to oppose the nomination of Pastrana, and when they were defeated, there was no longer a justification for their existence. The leaders of the "alliance" either disengaged themselves from the campaign or supported another candidate. The sole exception was José Elías del Hierro who remained as the campaign manager for Sourdís.

Sourdís campaigned within the National Front; that is, he promised that if elected he would continue the basic agreements between the Liberal and Conservative parties. In fact he claimed to be in a stronger position to make that statement than the other candidates since he had signed some of the agreements himself. However, Sourdís could not establish himself as a national candidate, even though he repeatedly denied representing only the Caribbean coast. He did most of his campaigning along the coast, and toward the end he concentrated almost exclusively in that area. For example, one of the headlines appearing in El Siglo read as follows: "If the Coast Votes United, the New President Will

Be Evaristo Sourdís"<sup>4</sup> or "The Coast Will Decide the Fortunes of Colombia."<sup>5</sup>

One of the most spectacular campaign tactics of any of the candidates was a trip by Sourdís along the Magdalena River on a ferry boat. The purpose of the trip was to attract national attention to himself and to present himself as a candidate who was concerned about the "forgotten provinces" of Colombia. During his trip he spent nine days visiting 47 villages in nine departments. He covered 930 kilometers and made 52 speeches before 136,000 persons.<sup>6</sup> In his speeches he emphasized the importance of the Magdalena River system to the national economy and demanded that the government spend more money in the region to develop it into an important transportation route for national and international commerce.<sup>7</sup>

The principal theme of the Sourdís campaign was decentralization of the political and economic life of the country. This, he argued, would benefit everyone. He noted that there was a strong trend for wealth and power to be centered in a few large cities, thus leaving the rest of the country near the poverty line. The Lleras Restrepo government, he claimed, had no policy at all for correcting the

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<sup>4</sup>El Siglo (April 12, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>El Siglo (January 15, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>7</sup>El Siglo (January 14, 1970), p. 4.

situation, in fact the government had only intensified situation. The importance of the departments as political and economic entities had declined to the point where they had little real autonomy to make important decisions concerning their own affairs. The inequalities existing among the various regions of the country were dangerous to national unity, according to Sourdís.<sup>8</sup>

Under a policy of decentralization more people would become involved in the decision-making process, which means that more persons have meaningful participation in the political system. Besides this, Sourdís argued that his policies would render additional benefits to the country. The middle class would benefit because decentralization tends to create many small towns with about the same level of industrial development. Such a policy also enhances political stability because a group plotting to overthrow the government would have to control several places instead of a mere handful. Finally decentralization diversifies the vertical structures of society, promotes private enterprise, and encourages local talent and the exploitation of local natural resources.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, in response to Pastrana's change in campaign style mentioned above, from the one-party to a multi-party model, Sourdís did not change tactics. He claimed throughout

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<sup>8</sup>El Siglo (March 9, 1970), p. 10.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

that Rojas was not a threat to Colombia and that Pastrana was trying to revive visions of the Rojas dictatorship merely to scare people into supporting him. Sourdís argued that, if Pastrana were really in trouble, then the fault should lay with the nominating convention which selected Pastrana and rejected Sourdís. In essence Sourdís said that Pastrana was getting exactly what he deserved. Sourdís rejected all government overtures to unite forces with Pastrana to fight Rojas Pinilla. The only solution to the situation he proposed was that Pastrana should withdraw from the campaign and support Sourdís.

Thus one can see that Sourdís had played a small role in the national campaign picture, although he was a significant force in the departments along the Caribbean coast. He campaigned in the traditional manner and on traditional subject areas; however, he did not have the organization nor the finances to become a significant threat to the National Front candidate.

#### B. The Betancur Campaign

Belisario Betancur Cuartas represented rebellion against the traditional methods of government, yet he remained within the framework and guidelines of the National Front. Unlike the other candidates, Betancur was almost completely ignored by the newspapers consulted by the author; however, what articles were found were generally favorable or tersely descriptive about the candidate. Most of Betancur's press

coverage came before the formal beginning of the campaign.

Politically Betancur promised to abide by all the agreements of the National Front; however, it would be a National Front of the people and not of the oligarchy. He promised to represent all factions of the Conservative Party and to respect the rights of the Liberal Party. Betancur stated:

I am trying to rescue the lost spirit of the National Front . . . the National Front has achieved the first stage of its original objectives, the restoration of public peace, but it has not attained the socio-economic goals.<sup>10</sup>

His campaign was a revolt against the elements who were operating the National Front, but not the system itself.

Betancur attempted to present an image of a humble man who appealed directly to the people without catering to the oligarchy. He called himself the candidate of the poor people and frequently appealed to the memory of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, the former popular Liberal leader who was assassinated in 1948. Many planks in his program could be described as populist. According to Betancur, the significance of the campaign was that:

. . . we Colombians are resolving a challenge about our future, deciding what kind of leaders will assume power. Will a reactionary group take over which will continue unjust privileges and destroy what has been accomplished or will the people impose their desires? . . . we must end the system of anarchic explosions and sporadic protest movements.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>El Tiempo (April 15, 1970), p. 14.

<sup>11</sup>El Tiempo (October 16, 1969), p. 6.



Betancur's form of populism offered something for everyone. He wanted to head a government of and for the workers. He promised to provide more schools, housing, and jobs. Like Sourdís, he advocated the decentralization of government operations in order to increase the importance of the less-developed departments. Under his government there would be less inflation and less foreign capital which, he claimed, was impeding the growth of Colombian-controlled industry. He proposed a new tax structure which would not punish those with fixed incomes.

In the face of the change in strategy on the part of Pastrana, Betancur, like Sourdís, did not extend a sympathetic hand. In fact, he down-played the likelihood of a Rojas victory: ". . . how desperate can the situation be that they forget the atrocities of the Rojas government and give him their support."<sup>12</sup> Thus he did not see, at least publicly, that Rojas Pinilla was a serious threat to the National Front. He denied that the campaign was essentially a contest between Pastrana and Rojas. Rather, he claimed that it was a battle between Rojas and himself. However, if Rojas did win, ". . . a possible triumph by Rojas . . . would be blamed on those who support the candidacy of the imposition (Pastrana)."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>El Tiempo (April 15, 1970), p. 14.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

Thus the Betancur campaign was somewhat better organized than the one led by Sourdís. He had sufficient time to become organized, and he did maintain offices in all the larger cities in the country. However, Betancur did not have the support of the prominent leaders of the Liberal or Conservative parties, the lone exception being former president Guillermo León Valencia.

### C. The Pastrana Campaign - Phase One

Misael Pastrana Borrero was the official candidate of the Liberal and Conservative parties. He received the backing of most nationally prominent leaders of both parties, but his principal supporter was the head of the Conservative Party, Mariano Ospina Pérez. He also received assistance from four other former presidents. Leaders of both parties campaigned actively for the candidate by either accompanying him on tour or by making separate campaign appearances on his behalf.

As stated above the first phase of Pastrana's campaign is characterized as a campaign like one would find in a country with only one major political party. This phase was predominant from the beginning of the campaign until early March, shortly after President Carlos Lleras Restrepo entered the campaign. The National Front, because it contained the two largest political parties in the country, did not feel that its power could be effectively challenged. Even with two splinter candidates, party leaders felt

Pastrana would win handily since no Front candidate had received less than 60 per cent of the vote previously. Pastrana considered that it was sufficient for him to tour the countryside to become acquainted with the local political leaders and become aware of the problems of the various regions of the country. It afforded him the opportunity to explain his policies to the people and remind them of the recent accomplishments of the National Front. He made almost no reference at all to any other candidate for the presidency. Pastrana's campaign centered on several key issues: continuation of the National Front, national integration, agrarian reform, and national dialogue.

Most of the time of this first phase was spent in reminding the people of the accomplishments of the National Front and arguing that Pastrana would continue the policies of previous administrations. Almost all the speeches of Mariano Ospina Pérez were on this theme. Both men reminded their audiences that the National Front had brought them peace and that Pastrana would continue this. Pastrana stated that: "To preserve the understanding between the parties is the primary need of the country."<sup>14</sup>

Pastrana spent much time in reassuring the leaders of both political parties that he would cooperate with them and not be partisan in his administration. He said that:

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<sup>14</sup>El Tiempo (January 16, 1970), p. 7.

I want to offer a loyal presidency so that both Liberals and Conservatives will know that, if they support me, they will not be betrayed at a later date. The integrity of each party will be respected and each party will be treated as an equal.<sup>15</sup>

He also stated that:

Any policy of importance should take as its basic proposition the preservation of peace . . . . To preserve the understanding between the parties is the primary need of the country.<sup>16</sup>

He was successful in gaining the support of most Liberals as indicated by the statement of Hernando Agudelo Villa, a member of the Liberal Party leadership. He listed seven reasons why Liberals should support Pastrana, some of which were: his guarantee that he would comply with previous agreements, that he would work to prevent the reoccurrence of political violence, that he would favor a peaceful revolution, and that he was the true candidate for the poor people of Colombia.<sup>17</sup>

Pastrana felt that some areas of the country were being neglected, which posed a de-stabilizing influence on the country. In order to prevent such a state of affairs, he advocated a program of decentralization which was similar to the one proposed by Sourdís. He believed that too much was being invested in the principal cities, such as Bogotá, Medellín, and Cali. This resulted in the isolation and

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<sup>15</sup>El Tiempo (January 31, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>16</sup>El Tiempo (January 16, 1970), p. 7.

<sup>17</sup>El Tiempo (December 15, 1969), p. 20.

impoverishment of the rest of the country. Pastrana advocated a policy in which the government should provide incentives to establish factories in medium-sized towns to take the population pressure off the major cities.<sup>18</sup> He argued that this policy would create conditions so that Colombians would not have to leave the country to make a living, and that it could serve as an incentive for those who had already departed to return to Colombia. Decentralization, he added, would ease the unemployment difficulties Colombia would face in the future. Pastrana predicted that there would be ten million new persons seeking jobs during the next ten years.<sup>19</sup>

Pastrana wanted to continue the agrarian reform policies of his predecessors:

I will transform the country into one of the landowners . . . . It is not concerned simply with distributing land but with improving the general conditions of farming, raising their dignity, providing education, housing, credit, and social security. I will end the two Colombias; one with privileges and classes, regions and large cities on the one hand, and the one with poverty, backwardness, and poor neighborhoods on the other . . . .<sup>20</sup>

Pastrana found that 76 per cent of the farmers had less than eight acres of land which made it difficult for them to lead a better life and which allowed few fruits of progress to

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<sup>18</sup>El Tiempo (October 21, 1969), p. 6.

<sup>19</sup>El Colombiano (March 20, 1970), Supplement p. 4.

<sup>20</sup>El Tiempo (December 15, 1969), p. 20.

reach the countryside.<sup>21</sup> Pastrana proposed several government programs which would raise the farmer's standard of living. He wanted to establish a program to grant credit to the farmers for the purchase of seeds and needed machinery. The government should provide quality seeds and technical assistance. Finally, Pastrana wanted to ensure that the farmers have a national and international market for their produce.<sup>22</sup> Pastrana felt that his agrarian policy would incorporate the farmers into the mainstream of public life. The new equilibrium would help maintain social and political balance in Colombia.<sup>23</sup>

Pastrana wanted to approach these and other problems facing the country through a national dialogue. He wanted to encourage the active participation of as many groups as possible. It was only through this process that the country could attain social justice. Pastrana felt that the National Front had achieved political peace and should now focus on social justice. In order to achieve this, he offered a program which offered something for everyone. For workers Pastrana proposed the creation of a commission to study wages and prices, the formation of new government enterprises to make more jobs available, and granting labor

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<sup>21</sup>El Colombiano (January 12, 1970), p. 13.

<sup>22</sup>El Tiempo (February 18, 1970 and March 12, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>23</sup>El Tiempo (March 18, 1970), p. 6.

a greater voice in policies affecting them. He promised to hold a special youth convention to allow students to give their views on national matters. Pastrana promised the students a responsible role in government-university relations. Finally, intellectuals would find that Pastrana's policy would permit the cultural life of Colombia to flower.<sup>24</sup>

Although Pastrana had the support of most of the prominent politicians of the country and the support of most organizations, his campaign faced several difficulties which weakened it considerably. Some of these were Pastrana's personality and frequent breakdowns in preparation for rallies.

The Miami Herald described Pastrana as having a Kennedy image, but he was shy and had to control his nerves before addressing large gatherings. He was incapable of drawing the large crowds which his chief rival could.<sup>25</sup> Some people considered Pastrana as the candidate of the imposition. That is, he was hand-picked by Lleras Restrepo and Ospina Pérez without taking into consideration other members of the Liberal or Conservative parties. There was some concern that Pastrana might not be able to run the

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<sup>24</sup>El Tiempo (March 1, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>25</sup>The Miami Herald (City Edition - April 12, 1970), p. 6.

government independently from the influence of these two men.<sup>26</sup>

Organizational breakdowns of rallies were of two types; violence and occasional lack of organization. Several rallies for Pastrana were disrupted by followers of either Rojas Pinilla or Betancur. Occasionally they were able to disrupt the proceedings completely. There was even an incident in which one of the prominent Conservative leaders in the village of Caucasia was assassinated by some of the prominent local leaders of ANAPO.<sup>27</sup> Three incidents of weak organization have come to the attention of the author. One example occurred in the department of Nariño where Pastrana's campaign workers failed to secure a balcony from where the candidate could speak after he arrived in the village.<sup>28</sup> The second occurred in the village of Chiriguana where the campaign workers failed to clear the central plaza of donkeys so that Pastrana could make an appropriate entry into the town.<sup>29</sup> The final incident, related by the political officer of the United States embassy, was a rally in which the public address system used by Pastrana never did function properly. Even though the first two incidents were reported by a newspaper which did not favor Pastrana, the

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<sup>26</sup>El Siglo (January 16, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>27</sup>El Tiempo (February 8, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>28</sup>El Siglo (February 9, 1970), p. 8.

<sup>29</sup>El Siglo (February 27, 1970), p. 15.



addition of the third account could lead one to believe that either these events did, in fact, occur or that incidents similar to them did happen.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, by March it seemed that Pastrana was still going to win the election easily. He had the backing of almost all prominent persons in the country and most of the powerful political and economic organizations. However, his campaign seemed to be conducted in generalities and oriented more to the accomplishments of his predecessors. Pastrana had traveled to many parts of the country to explain his policies to the people and the local political leadership; however, he seemed unable to get his message across to the people. The campaign was also plagued by poor organization to present the candidate to the public. It seemed that Pastrana appeared to the voters as the weakest of the National Front candidates.

#### D. The Rojas Campaign

Gustavo Rojas Pinilla was a former military dictator who was making his third attempt to return to power through a democratic election. He ran a campaign of populism which advocated the end of the oligarchy's control over Colombian

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<sup>30</sup> Another incident reported by the same official was the reaction of at least one individual in a crowd listening to a campaign address given by Pastrana. When questioned about his reaction to the speech, the individual, a farmer, replied that it was the same old garbage of previous governments.

government. Most of his appeals were directed toward the lower classes. Besides Pastrana, he had the best organized and financed campaign in the field, if for no other reason but that his workers had been at their jobs for eight years. His movement, the National Popular Alliance (ANAPO), has been described as a "social, nationalist, and revolutionary Christian movement and its most important goal is the union of the Colombian family and the glory of the fatherland."<sup>31</sup>

Rojas' program probably would have been revolutionary if carried out. He offered the lower classes a better life, now, not sometime in the future. Rojas traveled to all parts of the country to speak to the people. He claimed to be the only candidate for the presidency who was not taking orders from foreign power or traditional political bosses.<sup>32</sup>

Rojas Pinilla's campaign contained elements of either violence or threats of violence. In February he predicted that a bloody revolution would begin shortly after the election.<sup>33</sup> If his victory were disallowed by the government, Rojas threatened to use force and "talk in all corners of the country with rifles and machine guns."<sup>34</sup> He also launched veiled threats against the country's major news-

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<sup>31</sup>Sepúlveda Niño, p. 74.

<sup>32</sup>El Tiempo (February 13, 1970), p. 9.

<sup>33</sup>El Tiempo (February 1, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>34</sup>El Tiempo (February 2, 1970), p. 6.

papers and the national legislature, which had earlier stripped him of all his political rights. Probably his most important threat to the oligarchy came at the end of his second televised address in which he said:

The oligarchy will lose nothing. The only thing they are going to lose is power, which will pass from the oligarchy's hands to the hands of the Liberals and Conservatives in my movement.<sup>35</sup>

While threatening violence during and after his campaign, he promised peace during and after the election. He made frequent references that he would not take revenge on his opponents:

I have never in my life taken anything that belonged to someone else . . . . Money does not interest me . . . there is no other president who has received more gifts of gratitude from the people than me.<sup>36</sup>

I say to my friends that the victor must be magnanimous. I do not want blood, I do not want more sorrow for Colombians, and I want the people to receive happily this change in the system of government which will favor everyone.<sup>37</sup>

Rojas Pinilla advocated several government reforms. Under his government any official abusing his position would be summarily dismissed. He proposed that the government sell all its official vehicles and use the money saved from not using them for the schools. Rojas Pinilla wanted to make the bureaucracy smaller and more responsive to the people. He pointed out that the bureaucracy under his leadership in

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<sup>35</sup>El Tiempo (April 10, 1970), p. 9.

<sup>36</sup>El Tiempo (April 17, 1970), p. 14.

<sup>37</sup>El Tiempo (April 10, 1970), p. 9.

the 1950s was composed of only 10,000 civil servants while it had grown to 140,000 by 1970.<sup>38</sup>

In foreign policy Rojas Pinilla wanted to abolish the entire ministry of foreign relations because they did not serve any useful function. He argued that they were unnecessary since Colombia was not going to become involved in a war. Rojas also considered the United Nations and the Organization of American States as useless organs because they were unable to handle the crises placed before them. He cited the OAS' inability to resolve the so-called "Football War" between Honduras and El Salvador as a case in point.<sup>39</sup>

In economic policies the poor people would receive the benefits. Rojas Pinilla advocated the nationalization of all imports which would stop the devaluation of the peso and thus end all future raises in the cost of living.<sup>40</sup> He also claimed that the management techniques used by the Lleras government had the effect of pinching the lower class and the unemployed urban poor.<sup>41</sup> Thus the lower classes were being squeezed by rising taxes and slowly rising inflation.

He promised also that his government would guarantee all citizens their right to equal opportunity to work for the

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> La Prensa (February 18, 1970), p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> The New York Times (April 13, 1970), p. 5.

betterment of Colombia. He said that he would place special emphasis on the rights of women, who received the right to vote during his former term in office. After twelve years of government under the National Front, Rojas Pinilla pointed out that people were still hungry, without shelter, poorly dressed, without good medical care, and that they had to pay a high cost for doctor's treatments. Rojas further pointed out that every Colombian was in debt due to the high national debt which had risen from 760,000,000 pesos in 1957 to 40,000,000,000 by 1970.<sup>42</sup> In order to ease everyone's financial problems Rojas promised to lower prices and create a stable peso. In fact he wanted to create a new peso, such as had been done in Brazil, which would be on a par with the United States dollar. This would end the government's policy of devaluating the peso which lessened the honor of Colombia.<sup>43</sup>

In other campaign promises he agreed to pay special attention to the problems of education, health, and unemployment. In the interests of the people he planned to open all jails to release those who were being held by the Lleras government.

Rojas Pinilla did not change his style at any time during the campaign. After all, why should he when it seemed that his methods would lead to victory? As early as

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<sup>42</sup>El Tiempo (April 10, 1970), p. 9.

<sup>43</sup>El Colombiano (February 28, 1970), p. 3.

February, 1970, he stated, "I am no longer a candidate but I am president . . . ." <sup>44</sup>

Thus Rojas Pinilla ran an almost victorious campaign by taking advantage of the weakness of the official National Front candidate and by appealing to those who had received the fewest benefits from the many programs under the National Front. His party was well organized, especially at the local level. His proposed policies were aimed at the lower classes and offered them what seemed to be a positive program which would help them to a better way of life.

#### E. The Pastrana Campaign - Phase Two

As stated above this second phase of the campaign by Pastrana Borrero can be compared to a campaign as found in a country with a multi-party system. In this phase one can see a definite change of emphasis from merely trying to present his views and programs to the people to a strategy of trying to undermine the campaign and credibility of his chief rival, Rojas Pinilla.

Recognition of the threat of Rojas Pinilla to the National Front began early; however, they were limited to editorials and political cartoons in the newspapers. Even these were few and far between. For example, El Colombiano published a cartoon depicting Rojas standing over a shredded

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<sup>44</sup>El Tiempo (February 26, 1970), p. 6.

Colombian constitution and a second picture of his daughter standing over a burning constitution.<sup>45</sup> Editorials warned that the division of the National Front into three candidates only increased the likelihood of an ANAPO victory at the polls.

By late February the leaders of the two political parties became concerned about Pastrana's chances of winning the election. The Liberals began an intensive program to stop Rojas Pinilla, calling him a grave threat to the Republic.<sup>46</sup> The next day the leader of the Liberal Party, Augusto Espinosa Valderrama, called for unity within the National Front or else face the possibility of victory by Rojas Pinilla.

However, all attempts to slow the Rojas bandwagon seemed to fail. Finally on March 8, 1970, President Carlos Lleras Restrepo reversed his previous decision that the government should remain neutral during the campaign. He determined that, if he did not openly intervene, the National Front would probably lose the election. Thus on that date all forces had been mobilized to rescue Pastrana from electoral defeat. In his March 8 speech Lleras said, ". . . in order to defend the accomplishments of the National Front I am going to go out to all the villages of the

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<sup>45</sup>El Colombiano (October 5, 1969), p. 5.

<sup>46</sup>El Tiempo (February 24, 1970), p. 1.

country."<sup>47</sup> He referred to Rojas' attack on the Liberal Party headquarters when he was commander of the Third Brigade as an example of violent acts perpetrated by Rojas. He pointed out that the Liberals should not support Rojas Pinilla because he had appointed no one of that party to a position of responsibility during his government. Finally Lleras Restrepo appealed to the people to vote for the National Front so there would be no more persecutions and Colombia would have peace. He recounted some of the successes of the National Front in the areas of economics, education, health, and so forth.<sup>48</sup>

Lleras Restrepo justified the change in the government's policy toward the campaign by stating that he could no longer remain neutral about the future of his country: "I make use of the right to defend the National Front and I will continue to do it; I believe that Colombians like Liberty."<sup>49</sup> He accused Rojas of selling favors for import licenses and that he had broken his promise to the country to restore peace, justice, and freedom to Colombia.<sup>50</sup> The economy under Rojas had high taxes and resulted in an economy of extravagance, disaster, and disorder. Rojas was described as only a mediocre leader who was responsible for

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<sup>47</sup>El Siglo (March 9, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>El Colombiano (March 16, 1970), p. 23.

<sup>50</sup>El Colombiano (March 9, 1970), p. 24.



many disasters which had befallen Colombia since his appearance on the national scene.<sup>51</sup> Lleras felt that statements such as the above were necessary, ". . . to fill a vacuum which had been growing in the presidential campaign and to break the defeatist mentality which had been setting in among the National Front forces . . . ."52

The president's political activities were fully supported by other members of his government with the exception of the Procurator General, Mario Aramburu, who felt that Lleras Restrepo had exceeded his authority by campaigning. In protest he publicly offered his resignation. Lleras refused to accept the resignation because in doing so he would have indirectly admitted that Aramburu was correct. Lleras justified his position by stating that Aramburu's retention in the government would increase national harmony and that it was the right of a government official to criticize the government.<sup>53</sup>

In view of the low voting turnout in previous elections, the National Front leadership launched a campaign to get more voters to the polls. They did this by stressing the importance of everyone's participation in the election. They warned that "bad presidents are elected by good citizens

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<sup>51</sup>El Tiempo (March 16, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>52</sup>El Colombiano (March 10, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>53</sup>El Tiempo (March 31, 1970), p. 9.

who fail to vote."<sup>54</sup> The Front leadership felt that a large voter turnout would be in their favor because these additional persons would be relatively less politically motivated and thus more likely to vote their party identification. Besides appealing for a large voter response in speeches, El Tiempo ran a series of headlines on its front page in late February which announced, "Your Vote Can Be Decisive." As an indicator of the seriousness of the situation, the headline was later changed to read, "Your Vote Is Decisive." These headlines did not appear in only one issue but were run for weeks at a time.

One of the tactics in this phase of the campaign was an attempt to destroy the character of Rojas Pinilla and his ability to govern. He was accused of being a demagogue, liar, traitor, and enslaver. El Tiempo published a letter written by Rojas in 1957 which indicated that the dictator had received large loans for his private benefit by using his government position to receive favorable terms.<sup>55</sup> The same paper also recounted the incident of the popular Liberal leader Rafael Rangel Gómez. Rojas Pinilla offered this guerrilla leader amnesty if he laid down his arms. Rangel accepted the agreement; however, Rojas broke his promise and arrested him.<sup>56</sup> A third example was the accusation that

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<sup>54</sup>La Prensa (April 7, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>55</sup>El Tiempo (March 13, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>56</sup>El Tiempo (April 9, 1970), p. 19.

ANAPO had at least four hundred known Communists in the party lists for legislative seats in departments of Atlántico, Antioquia, Cundinamarca, Meta, and Quindío.<sup>57</sup> All these examples were intended to show how treacherous Rojas Pinilla could become if he won the election.

A second tactic used in this phase of the campaign was to offer Pastrana as the only alternative to a dictatorship: "A vote for Pastrana is a vote for the security of the country. Voting for Pastrana is voting against a dictatorship."<sup>58</sup> There were occasional appeals to the followers of the splinter candidates not to waste their votes but to support Pastrana to stop Rojas Pinilla. The National Front leaders reminded the voters that, if they really wanted peace, understanding, and social justice, they would not get them under a dictatorship, but only under the auspices of the National Front. Thus Pastrana was portrayed as the candidate for peace.

A third tactic used in the campaign was educating the people in what it was like under the Rojas dictatorship of the 1950s. The government had come to the conclusion that the only reason why so many people were supporting Rojas Pinilla was that they were too young to remember. In March, Carlos Lleras Restrepo said:

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<sup>57</sup> El Tiempo (April 12, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> El Tiempo (April 8, 1970 and April 14, 1970), p. 1.

Much has been done in the area of social change, although it has been slow and difficult. We need to become teachers to explain the situation to the people. Today I am going to give a history lesson to remind you of certain things you may have forgotten. I want you to think of the children who we want to see grow up without persecution and not suffer as previous generations have done, such as the one under General Rojas. For this reason we need to preserve peace and freedom . . . .<sup>59</sup>

Many leaders felt that twelve years of peace had erased many memories of the 1950s such as tortures, newspaper closings, and other atrocities.

The process of education took many forms. One of them was the use of full-page advertisements which appeared in most newspapers throughout the country. One of these advertisements called upon the people to think so that they could choose between violence and chaos on the one hand and peace and progress on the other. The presentation included photographs of some of the atrocities committed under the Rojas dictatorship such as the clash between the army and the students which left several students dead. The warning said, "Think . . . the victims can be your brothers, or your sons, or even yourself."<sup>60</sup> A second full-page advertisement showed how Rojas had betrayed his country. The first picture portrayed the people receiving Rojas as the savior and restorer of peace. The second photograph indicated that, after four years in power, Rojas had betrayed

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<sup>59</sup>El Tiempo (March 9, 1970), p. 8.

<sup>60</sup>El Tiempo (April 5, 1970), p. 25.

the people by becoming a bloody dictator who, with other members of his family, committed all kinds of abuses of power and made shady business deals which enriched them at the expense of the country. The final picture showed the reaction of the people who had become aware of the misdeeds of Rojas and how that had led to his overthrow.<sup>61</sup>

The second way the National Front leaders tried to educate the people was through an almost constant barrage of anti-Rojas political cartoons in the newspapers. In an El Tiempo cartoon Rojas was seen fraternizing with the Venezuelan dictator, Pérez Jimenez. It depicted Pérez Jimenez giving iron chains to Rojas with the instructions that they could be used on the Colombian people.<sup>62</sup> A second cartoon was entitled "The Golden Dream of Dictators." It showed Rojas dreaming of a journalist in jail who had a ball and chain on his leg. The journalist was reading a newspaper with the caption "Peruvian Press," referring to the press censorship in that country.<sup>63</sup>

The propaganda even had a touch of humor in a photograph taken by El Tiempo. It depicted a poster for Rojas Pinilla which someone had placed over an announcement for a movie, "Blood in the Bull Ring." This recalled an incident in the Bogotá bull ring in 1956 when Rojas' daughter ordered

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<sup>61</sup>El Tiempo (April 12, 1970), p. 21.

<sup>62</sup>El Tiempo (April 3, 1970), p. 5.

<sup>63</sup>El Tiempo (April 5, 1970), p. 5.

the army to open fire on spectators who had been denouncing Rojas' family.<sup>64</sup>

A third method used to educate the public was to publish the findings of experts who analyzed the program presented by Rojas. In December Rojas claimed that he was "the candidate inspired by the will of God for the salvation of Colombia."<sup>65</sup> In response the Pastrana forces published the opinions of several Church leaders on ANAPO. Their report dealt with sacrileges and other profanities leveled against the Church by Rojas as well as tales of many priests and students being murdered and of many tear gas bombings of churches.

In April El Tiempo published a report by a group of experts, who remained nameless, who analyzed the program of Rojas Pinilla. They claimed that his economic program was impossible to carry out without destroying the current economic structure. They argued that the appreciation of the peso would only slow exports by making them more expensive for foreigners. This would result in less foreign exchange available to purchase needed imports. The country could not afford any more loss of funds since there was not quite enough to cover the current rate of imports. The experts found that it was impossible to lower the cost of living as Rojas had proposed. If agricultural prices, for

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<sup>64</sup>El Tiempo (April 8, 1970), p. 28.

<sup>65</sup>El Tiempo (December 4, 1969), p. 6.

example, were lowered, then the farmers would be ruined. Rojas, they claimed, had overlooked the fact that one person's expenses were another man's income.

The experts found that Rojas' project of decreasing the number of government employees would not be in the interest of most Colombians. There were more civil servants in the 1970s than in the 1950s because there were more people and they demanded more public services such as health, education, transportation, and housing. If the government spent less money, there would be fewer services available for the people.

Finally, the experts decried the financial program of ANAPO. They found that the national debt was not excessive since income from imports was increasing and since the national debt had been greater in the past. The country, they argued, would be even more in debt if there was a shortage of foreign exchange, which would result from Rojas' policies. The experts praised the current government for its austerity program and its moderate rate of expenditures.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, the leadership of the National Front used a variety of methods to meet the threat of ANAPO. They were employed in crescendo fashion so that by election day the voters were being bombarded with anti-Rojas propaganda.

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<sup>66</sup>El Tiempo (April 15, 1970), p. 14.

## F. Conclusions

The situation was thus set for election day, April 19, 1970. Pastrana began his campaign in the same style as his predecessors had used, and they had been elected by overwhelming majorities. As expected the two splinter candidates were unable to mount any serious threat of winning the election. However, Rojas Pinilla, through his direct appeals to the desires of the lower classes for a better way of life, immediately forced Pastrana to change his campaign tactics. Rather than ignoring Rojas, Pastrana had to confront him directly and attempt to discredit him. In the end the candidate, supported by government officials, party officials, and most of the mass media, was able to meet the challenge presented by Rojas.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE AFTERMATH OF THE ELECTION

This chapter deals with the events of election day and of those shortly thereafter which were a consequence of the election results. In addition it attempts to analyze some voting patterns in the 1970 election. The chapter is also concerned with the reaction of the people to the results of the election and what counter-measures the government took to preserve order. The second section discusses the effects which the 1970 election had upon the elite, in terms of policies and operating procedures. The final section is concerned with an analysis of the voting data in order to determine, among other things, where the support of the two principal candidates lay.

#### A. The Crisis

That this election produced a crisis came to nobody's surprise. The propaganda machine of Rojas Pinilla had been dropping hints that there would be trouble if Rojas did not win easily. The headline of Alerta the day before the elections read, "Tomorrow Rojas Will Be Elected." The accompanying article claimed that Rojas could lose only if the government committed fraud; therefore, it outlined

methods to prevent it.<sup>1</sup> Other followers of Rojas Pinilla proclaimed that, if he won, he should take office immediately without waiting for the expiration of Lleras' term.

In face of these threats and also in recognition of the fact that the election would probably be close, the government began to take certain precautions. The military went on training maneuvers in downtown Bogotá to familiarize the troops with the territory and also to serve as a warning to any would-be troublemaker. Government spokesmen warned the people that prohibition laws would be in effect on election day and that the military would inspect civilians for weapons.

Election day, April 19, went smoothly and most people were in a carnival mood as they went to cast their ballots. People were dressed their best, and the banners and symbols of the candidates were everywhere. However, such an atmosphere lasted only until the early hours of the evening when the first returns became available. These initial reports indicated that the race between Pastrana and Rojas was extremely close. Which candidate was ahead at a given moment depended on which radio station a person listened to. Each radio station broadcast the results which were more favorable to the candidate it supported. In order to prevent all this confusion in reporting, the government ordered all radio stations to broadcast only official reports. One

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<sup>1</sup>El Colombiano (April 19, 1970), p. 4.

radio station defied the order, Radio Latina owned by Rojas Pinilla, and it was closed. The government justified its action by stating that the action would prevent disorders which could create illusions which, in turn, could later be converted into lies.<sup>2</sup> La Prensa of Argentina reported that, with four per cent of the vote counted, Rojas did, indeed, hold a slight lead and gave a strong showing in the cities of Barranquilla, Medellín, Pasto, Cali, and Ibagúe.<sup>3</sup> To add to the confusion, the leading Bogotá newspapers of the two political parties could not agree who was winning. El Tiempo proclaimed that Pastrana was winning while El Siglo reported that Rojas held a small lead.

In face of the confusion and the closeness of the election, the supporters of Rojas Pinilla took to the streets to proclaim their cause. In the first night alone about 500 people were arrested and about \$150,000 damage was made to government buildings, radio stations, and businesses.<sup>4</sup> Rojas Pinilla disputed the accuracy of any reports which indicated that he was not winning. In fact, he claimed that, according to his own calculations, he held at least a 46,000 vote lead over Pastrana.<sup>5</sup> He further proclaimed that his party

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<sup>2</sup>El Tiempo (April 22, 1970), p. 24.

<sup>3</sup>La Prensa (April 20, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>El Colombiano (April 20, 1970), p. 13.

<sup>5</sup>La Prensa (April 21, 1970), p. 1.

was going to defend its victory with blood and fire.<sup>6</sup>

The first two days after the election were ones of extreme tension. There was uncertainty about what Rojas Pinilla, the government, or the military might do next. Each day large crowds gathered in downtown Bogotá and in several other major cities throughout the country. These effectively brought most of the economic activity of the country to a standstill. There were many reports of store windows broken and businesses looted. However, the military was able to maintain general order with the use of tear gas and displays of force. Throughout the crisis the military completely backed the actions of the government. As an indication of the military's support of the government's policies, Berbaridi Camacho Leyva, head of the National Police, said in retrospect:

A country like Colombia cannot permit itself the luxury of opening its doors to anarchy which leads to an abuse of political freedom. The first duty of governments is to organize economic production and education . . . . Nowhere have we had to confront disturbances which have been significant in regards to the peace of the nation . . . . What is happening in these developing countries is that democratic principles have not been well absorbed. It seems that people confuse democracy with subversion and disorder . . . . We cannot permit ourselves the luxury of allowing dissidents to take advantage of democracy as if it were anarchy. If we permitted such acts we would be stimulating slavery which in turn produces misery, poor education and especially the inability to coordinate economic production in a government open to all kinds of outlooks on labor and social development.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>El Tiempo (April 21, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>7</sup>El Siglo (May 11, 1970), p. 6.

The government's response to this challenge by Rojas Pinilla reveals quite possibly that the main goal of the National Front, that of lessening intense hatreds between the Liberals and the Conservatives, indeed had been successful. The crisis was easily the gravest one which the National Front faced in its twelve year history. In face of many sharp and fierce attacks, the Conservative and Liberal parties could easily have blamed each other for the situation, thus dissolving the union. Instead, the two parties worked together, applying just the right amount of pressure to keep ANAPO off balance and to maintain control without being repressive.

At first the government took low key actions to disband the crowds demonstrating for Rojas. In addition to the military actions described above, this step included an address to the nation by the President, Carlos Lleras Restrepo, over radio and television. The theme of his speech was an appeal for calm and a reassurance that the ballots would be counted fairly. Lleras denied any possibility of fraud and he promised to turn the government over to whichever candidate won the election. He appealed to the people to wait until the election results had been finalized before taking to the streets. Finally the President reminded the people that the vote tabulation was conducted by the Registaduria, which was a separate, independent government

agency free from pressures from the chief executive.<sup>8</sup>

As might be expected, these actions had little effect on the demonstrators. Serious confrontations occurred in Bogotá, Cali, Cartagena, and Barranquilla the day after Lleras' address. The government allowed these gatherings to continue as long as they were relatively peaceful. But on the evening of April 21, the national police intercepted two trucks of shock troops trying to enter Bogotá to join the demonstrators. Rojas also called for a general strike of transportation workers, but his was only partially successful. As night fell the center of Bogotá had become a virtual sea of humanity, and broken glass lay everywhere.

In response to these pressures, the government took more severe measures to keep the situation under control. President Lleras made his second speech to the nation since the election. At first he merely repeated what he had told the nation the previous night. He also warned the populace about a possible subversion plot led by ANAPO. Lleras claimed that the government had the full support of the military and that there was no possibility of a coup d'état precipitated by unruly crowds. He refused to allow any person or group to interfere with the counting of the ballots, since his was a government of laws, not demonstrations.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Lleras warned that he would permit no

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<sup>8</sup>La Prensa (April 21, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>9</sup>El Tiempo (April 22, 1970), p. 24.

further demonstrations and that the armed forces were prepared to dissolve any labor strikes.

The threats were not idle ones, however. President Lleras placed his personal prestige on the line to preserve order. He stated that: ". . . dead is the only way I will leave the Presidential Palace, of this fact those who are trying to create disorders and break the peace should become aware . . . ." <sup>10</sup> In order to back up his words with action, Lleras declared a nationwide state of siege and a curfew. For Bogotá, the curfew began one hour after the president made his address:

. . . people have one hour to get to their homes. Those who remain outside will be apprehended . . . that all men and women of Colombia make efforts to defend the peace and become soldiers for freedom and justice. <sup>11</sup>

This measure required all persons to be in their homes each night after 9:00 p.m. and forbade all public gatherings for any purpose. Any group of five or more persons would be dispersed by armed force.

The speech had its desired effects. An official at the United States embassy, who was working that night, described the downtown Bogotá area before the speech as so packed with humanity that it would be almost impossible to drive a tank through. Immediately after the speech all the people began to scatter. The official saw several overloaded buses and

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

taxis trying to get people home before the curfew began. Within hours the previously crowded downtown area was deserted.

In spite of all this, ANAPO leaders still claimed victory and refused to hear any other verdict.<sup>12</sup> Rojas Pinilla claimed that the government had been committing electoral fraud for months. He added that party officials had been threatened and that buses used by his followers were stopped. "I dare say the fraud has been so scandalous that friends of Mr. Pastrana still have not stopped casting their ballots," he declared.<sup>13</sup>

In another effort to subdue ANAPO, President Lleras warned that he would invoke more severe measures if the situation warranted it. However, with the imposition of the state of siege and the curfew, the momentum of Rojas Pinilla had been broken. In order to make sure that the ANAPO leaders did not create any more trouble, Lleras ordered the arrest of many top leaders and placed Rojas Pinilla under house arrest. He did the latter under the pretext that he was protecting Rojas from subversive elements within his own movement. The military surrounded the block around Rojas' home and let no one enter without a military escort.<sup>14</sup> Rojas replied that detentions were

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<sup>12</sup>El Siglo (April 22, 1970), p. 8.

<sup>13</sup>El Tiempo (April 22, 1970), p. 8.

<sup>14</sup>El Tiempo (April 23, 1970), p. 9.



illegal and arbitrary, and he called for his immediate release. All of Rojas' threats of further violence never materialized. An official of ANAPO stated:

The objective analysis of the present situation leads one to the unquestionable conclusion that the present government is the real cause of the current violence. The government is creating an explosive climate whose inevitable consequence will not be delayed for long. It was done by preparing and consummating fraud by incarcerating our leader and his family, by preventing through force the ANAPO leaders' ability to observe the vote tabulation, and by abolishing the freedom of assembly, and by undermining the already scarce gains of the workers through the government's drastic repressive measures . . . .<sup>15</sup>

The voting tabulation continued at a near snail's pace due to the remoteness of some areas of the country, as well as other reasons. After three days of counting, Pastrana had only a 50,000 vote lead over Rojas. The vote count was terminated on April 26 with the declaration of Pastrana as the unofficial victor, pending confirmation of the official recount which would be completed in June. The final vote tally is indicated in Table III.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>El Siglo (May 14, 1970), p. 11.

<sup>16</sup>The first question which came to some people's minds upon reading the results was, "who is Rafael Corredor," since his name was never mentioned during the campaign. After some investigation it was found that Corredor had placed a bet with several friends that Sourdís would not finish last. This seemed to be a safe bet for his friends since almost everyone predicted that Sourdís would finish last. But what Corredor did not say was that he himself had filed for the presidency so that he would finish last and thus be able to collect his bets.

TABLE III  
FINAL VOTE TABULATION

Name	Votes	Per Cent
Misael Pastrana Borrero	1,625,025	40.3
Gustavo Rojas Pinilla	1,561,468	38.9
Belisario Betancur Cuartas	471,350	11.7
Evaristo Sourdís Juliao	336,286	8.3
Rafael Corredor	11	0.0
Blank/Void Votes	<u>42,318</u>	<u>1.0</u>
	4,036,458	100.2

Source: Registraduría Nacional de Estadística.

Since the government had successfully blocked all other options open to him, Rojas Pinilla now based his position on electoral fraud. He claimed that his occurred in various forms such as moral and physical coercion, alteration of identification cards, violation of seals on the ballot boxes, and a biased selection of vote counters.<sup>17</sup> Rojas said, ". . . we have not recognized and we will not recognize the victory of the National Front candidate . . . . ANAPO will continue to be an enemy of the system."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup>El Tiempo (May 14, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>18</sup>El Tiempo (April 29, 1970), p. 6.

However, there were inconsistencies in the ANAPO position on electoral fraud, which indicates that the party may not have believed that there really had been any. Marco A. Castroño, an ANAPO official, stated that, based on his observations, "up to this moment no irregularity had been seen for the purpose of committing fraud."<sup>19</sup> Rojas himself later admitted that there had been no fraud during the ballot count or the registering of voters. These statements are in accord with what the author heard from an official of the United States embassy, who observed part of the ballot counting process.

Despite the frivolity of these charges of fraud, the government ordered an investigation, if for no other reason than to assure the large following of Rojas that they had not been cheated. To ignore these charges might have undermined the legitimacy of Pastrana's claim to the presidency. President Lleras carefully explained to the public the process used in tabulating the votes and how the persons were selected who counted the ballots. He further appointed a special committee to investigate all claims of electoral fraud presented by responsible individuals. The committee then was to report their findings to the president and to the public. The newspaper El Siglo claimed that there had been serious fraud in the departments of Putumayo, Bolívar, and Santander. After investigating these claims and others,

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<sup>19</sup>El Tiempo (April 27, 1970), p. 6.

the committee published its final report on May 5, 1970, which stated that it had discovered no fraud during the election.

Thus the government had succeeded in immobilizing ANAPO, at least long enough for it to regain control of the situation. President Lleras applied only the amount of pressure needed to maintain control of the situation and to keep the leaders of ANAPO off balance. The government handled the situation, giving the appearance, if not in fact, of operating openly and within the constitution. The government lifted the curfew on May 15 and the state of siege on May 16.

#### B. Consequences of the Election

To read the speeches of the political leaders after the election, one might get the impression that the losers had won and that the victors had lost. Some people, such as Saturnino Sepúlveda Niño, claimed that the political dominance of the traditional parties had come to an end.<sup>20</sup> Other persons proclaimed that a viable third party had been created. In reviewing the election Rojas Pinilla said:

The mistake committed by the governments of the National Front has been to seek the development of the country while ignoring the human factor. They have sought progress but at a high social cost. I, on the other hand, advocate a harmonic and ordered development of Colombia without forgetting that the progress cannot be

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<sup>20</sup>Sepúlveda Niño. This was the basic argument of the book.

accomplished by burdening the populace with taxes and other measures which raise the cost of living. This only brings hunger and misery to millions of Colombians. It seems that the only goal of the National Front is to balance the budget, decree new taxes, weaken the buying power of the currency, and put the nation into debt . . . . As far as concrete solutions to the tremendous problem of unemployment, the country is not aware of any realistic measures. Everything has been planning, programming, and concern; but nothing clear and concrete. On the other hand the country has been poorly informed of the deeds of the government and of the previous two administrations which have precipitated the crisis.<sup>21</sup>

The two splinter candidates who were defeated at the polls also acted as if they were the victors in fact. Evaristo Sourdís said that the top leaders of both traditional parties had been soundly defeated.<sup>22</sup> Belisario Betancur analyzed the election in this fashion:

. . . the people like this crisis because they know and feel that, through it, the long-awaited opportunity has come to change the state of things and some rules of the game which were not in accordance with their hopes or needs.<sup>23</sup>

While the losers were proclaiming their moral victory, the leaders of the two traditional parties began to assess the effects of the election on their respective organizations. Most leaders who supported Pastrana accepted the election results as a challenge to the traditional parties. The challenge was to overcome the problems which had precipitated the rise of Rojas Pinilla. This section is concerned

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<sup>21</sup>El Siglo (May 3, 1970), p. 14.

<sup>22</sup>El Tiempo (May 9, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

only with what these leaders planned, rather than actions taken, since to pursue the latter would not have a direct bearing on the topic under study.

President Lleras called for the reassessment of the social situation in Colombia and a program to increase social change. He called upon Colombians to look at the reality of the situation and then to make the necessary sacrifices to carry out the needed reforms. ". . . what the country needs to reunite the people is to study the true situation of the country and to seek solutions for the problems," Lleras said.<sup>24</sup>

Other political leaders analyzed the structure and organization of the political parties in order to determine what went wrong. Turbay Ayala, of the Liberal Party, believed that Rojas Pinilla was able to do well because ANAPO had better organization, more effective communication with the masses, and the ability to identify with the aspirations of the lower classes.<sup>25</sup> Other political leaders felt that the parties had abandoned their traditional positions on the issues. Some blamed the crisis on insolent party leaders.

President-elect Pastrana met the situation by re-emphasizing his campaign theme of a national dialogue. He said he was willing to cooperate with any group to arrive

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>El Colombiano (May 31, 1970), p. 24.

at a synthesis of national aspirations and to arrive at effective solutions to the problems facing Colombia. Pastrana felt that the mood of the country would permit nothing short of positive action for social reforms, especially in the areas of underemployment and unemployment.<sup>26</sup> Pastrana further tried to gain support by emphasizing the basic problems of the poor: unemployment, housing, education, health, and social security. He stated:

With the critical spirit which characterizes us, it has been said that today commissions are not needed and the people look with displeasure on the organization of committees because the people only hope for and demand solutions . . . . The National Front has made a tremendous effort in the areas of infrastructure and social progress . . . it is certain that with the impact of increasing population and growing urbanization the satisfied demands have fallen short before new demands, and from this undeniable truth we should work with all our efforts . . . . We cannot become lost in abstract programs . . . frontal and decisive attack on misery.<sup>27</sup>

As might be expected after such a close election, the question did arise concerning who was to blame for the near defeat. One interesting note after reading the various accusations is that no responsible party official blamed the other traditional party for the crisis, which is another example of the National Front's primary goal being achieved. In fact, Pastrana publicly praised the support he received from the Liberal Party: ". . . the Liberal Party complied

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<sup>26</sup>El Colombiano (May 15, 1970), p. 17.

<sup>27</sup>El Tiempo (April 30, 1970), p. 6.

with its initial promises, which resulted in support at the same high level as the party offered at the beginning of the campaign."<sup>28</sup>

The leaders of the Conservative Party received some abuse from the rank and file of the party. Some accused Ospina Pérez of forcing a poor candidate onto the party as the reason for their near demise.<sup>29</sup> However, the Liberal Party faced greater internal problems than the Conservatives. The Liberal Party did not function as well as expected and there was a strong movement to remove the party leader, Augusto Espinosa Valderrama, who many felt precipitated the party crisis. Many people felt that the Liberal leaders had lost contact with the people they were representing, which tarnished the party's image as supporter of the urban masses. Many Liberals wanted a special party convention to select a new governing board, but they could not agree on who should be the delegates. Finally, on April 24, prominent Liberal leaders met at which time the leadership offered their resignations, thus clearing the way for a new Liberal convention to select their replacements.

Thus in reviewing the electoral crisis the political elites of Colombia realized that much work lay ahead if they were going to maintain control over the country. They would have to make an increased effort to involve the masses in

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>El Siglo (April 21, 1970), p. 2.



the development of the country in such a way that they received tangible benefits from it. The elite had received a very strong warning that, if they continued with the policies of the past, they could very easily lose their control over the country to someone like Rojas Pinilla.

### C. Voting Patterns

This section is a preliminary attempt to analyze the results of the 1970 presidential election. It is termed preliminary because there is a scarcity of survey data available; thus heavy reliance is placed on aggregate data. What survey data are available are in a study published by the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (D.A.N.E.), which was a survey study in the city of Cali, the third largest city in the country. The aggregate data used below were found in the Registraduría Nacional de Estadística which published a book containing the election results in each town divided into their respective departments. As stated above, the data provided by the latter source are not completely accurate, as is usual in most Latin American government statistics. Besides the expected errors in compiling the data, the author has discovered at least one error in totaling the number of votes cast in a town.

Rather than formulating the research questions and then applying the data to them, this section will try to answer those questions which can be handled with the information

available. Some of the propositions raised in this section are as follows: Did the election results show as great a defeat for the National Front as it seemed after reviewing the campaign rhetoric? How well did Pastrana and Rojas fare in the major cities and in the countryside? What were some of the socio-economic characteristics of the supporters of the two leading candidates? Finally, how did these two candidates fare in the areas of traditional Conservatives or Liberal strength?

Table IV groups the presidential candidates by their loyalty to the National Front. Even though both Betancur and Sourdís strongly opposed Pastrana, there was nothing in their campaigns, rhetoric or action, which would lead one to believe they would subvert the National Front if elected. The votes listed in the table as undetermined consist of ballots cast for Rafael Corredor and those which were voided. The latter was included in that category, since they could result from unintentional error as well as from protest votes. This table indicates that the National Front, when all three candidates are taken together, did not fare that poorly. In fact it did as well as it had the last time a Conservative was the presidential candidate. The percentage of votes received by Rojas was only 10 per cent higher than in the previous presidential election in 1966. All this leads to the conclusion that the crisis did not occur because of some tremendous rise on the part of Rojas Pinilla, but rather because the National Front declined.

TABLE IV  
FINAL VOTE TABULATION BY PROPONENTS AND  
OPPONENTS OF THE NATIONAL FRONT

Name	Votes	Per Cent
Misael Pastrana Borrero	1,625,025	
Belisario Betancur Cuartas	471,350	
Evaristo Sourdís Juliao	<u>336,286</u>	
	2,432,661	60.3
Gustavo Rojas Pinilla	1,561,468	
Blank	<u>36,892</u>	
	1,598,360	39.6
Undetermined	5,437	0.1

Source: Registraduría Nacional de Estadística.

The socio-economic characteristics of the supporters of the two principal candidates were found to be in accord with the general impressions which the author had received while in Colombia. Table V shows the results in Colombia's ten largest cities, listed in their order of size. These cities are important to the election results because they represent 1,354,771 votes, or 33.6 per cent of the total ballots. This table shows that Rojas Pinilla won all but two of these cities, having won a plurality in the seven largest cities in the country. Even if one were to extend the list to include all departmental capitals or even further to encompass all towns with more than 25,000 possible voters, the

percentages would vary no more than .5% from the totals given in the table.

TABLE V  
FINAL VOTE TABULATION BY ROJAS AND PASTRANA  
IN COLOMBIA'S MAJOR CITIES

City	Total Votes		Per Cent Total Vote	
	Rojas	Pastrana	Rojas	Pastrana
Bogotá	253,562	224,406	45.0	39.8
Medellín	84,098	72,982	43.6	37.9
Cali	74,907	63,907	46.4	39.6
Barranquilla	51,102	16,778	38.7	12.7
Bucaramanga	40,547	22,969	58.5	33.1
Cúcuta	30,838	17,028	59.3	32.3
Cartagena	22,941	15,658	44.4	30.3
Manizales	13,361	16,049	27.9	33.5
Pereira	13,903	22,862	28.7	47.2
Ibagúe	15,611	13,516	44.9	38.9
TOTALS	600,870	486,150	44.4	35.9

Source: Registraduría Nacional de Estadística.

The next three tables were compiled by survey research in a study of Cali, Colombia's third largest city, published by D.A.N.E. Table VI indicates the relationship between social class and the election results. This shows that Pastrana received his strongest support from the upper

TABLE VI  
 CALI VOTING BY SOCIAL CLASS, PER CENT  
 PRE-ELECTORAL AND POST-ELECTORAL

Candidate	Upper Class		Middle Class		Working Class		Lower Class	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Pastrana	65.8	76.4	32.3	43.7	23.8	26.8	22.1	17.9
Rojas	3.8	0.0	17.3	14.4	24.3	18.2	30.0	37.0
Betancur	11.4	9.8	8.3	12.7	5.7	6.3	6.3	3.6
Sourdís	3.8	2.0	2.2	2.3	**	**	.5	.1
Abstention	12.7	12.0	33.1	25.9	41.6	44.3	37.2	39.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\*\* = not given in original report

Source: Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística.

class while Rojas Pinilla received almost no support at all from this same group. Rojas' support came mainly from the working and lower classes. Table VII shows the relationship between age and the vote. After breaking ages into groups of ten years, one finds that Pastrana received a majority of votes from those people aged in their fifties and sixties. Rojas Pinilla, on the other hand, earned a majority of votes from those persons in their twenties. This seemed to indicate that one of the contentions of the National Front leadership--that one of the reasons for the increasing support of Rojas Pinilla was that they did not remember what it was really like under the dictatorship in the 1950s--was well founded. Table VIII describes the relationship between social class and the vote in certain neighborhoods in Bogotá and Medellín, the country's second largest city. These results tend to correlate with Table VI in terms of social class and the vote. In those two cities Pastrana won a majority of votes from the upper and middle class neighborhoods while Rojas Pinilla won a majority in the lower class areas.

Table IX lists some of the common responses given to the question, Why did a person vote for a certain candidate? This question was submitted to the people of Cali and also in a survey done by Miles Williams.<sup>30</sup> In the case of the Cali study, the list is merely given as typical responses,

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<sup>30</sup>Williams, pp. 154-155.

TABLE VII  
 CALI PRESIDENTIAL VOTE BY AGE -  
 PRE-ELECTORAL PERCENTAGES

Candidate	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-Over	Total
Pastrana	34.2	43.3	44.8	50.6	60.7	44.2
Rojas	54.4	44.1	40.3	44.0	30.8	44.4
Betancur	11.4	12.6	14.9	5.4	8.5	11.4
TOTALS	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	193	215	134	75	94	711

Source: Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística.

while in the national study by Williams, he cites some percentages of those giving a certain response. The responses given to both surveys were relatively similar. In essence the people said that they supported Rojas Pinilla because of his program; others voted for Pastrana because he represented the National Front.

Tables X and XI are based on a study of the 1970 presidential election as divided into departments grouped according to the way in which they supported the traditional parties in the past. The party loyalties were determined by Ben Burnett in his doctoral dissertation in 1957.<sup>31</sup> Through his study of Colombian elections between 1930 and 1948 (the

<sup>31</sup>Burnett, pp. 83-111.

TABLE VIII

## OFFICIAL RESULTS IN STRATIFIED AREAS, BOGOTÁ AND MEDELLÍN

Candidate	Upper	Lower Upper	Middle	Lower Middle	Lower	Marginal	Total
<u>BOGOTÁ</u>							
Pastrana	75.8	67.0	56.4	35.5	27.8	11.8	40.8
Rojas	8.3	11.9	19.5	50.0	62.7	84.2	44.6
Betancur	11.9	17.6	20.9	13.0	8.3	3.0	12.6
Sourdís	3.5	3.0	2.4	.8	.3	**	1.2
Blank	.4	.5	.8	.7	.8	1.2	.8
TOTALS	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	21,499	22,668	61,073	67,895	131,417	7,875	312,427
<u>MEDELLÍN</u>							
Pastrana	74.2		57.2		23.0		36.7
Rojas	7.5		16.5		64.5		46.9
Betancur	16.5		24.8		11.4		15.2
Sourdís	1.2		.9		.2		.4
Blank	.5		.6		.7		.7
TOTALS	100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0
N =	9,080		20,218		55,013		84,311

\*\* = not given in original report.

Source: Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística.



TABLE IX

## TYPICAL REASONS FOR VOTING FOR PASTRANA AND ROJAS

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Rojas Pinilla

I support his program (49.8%).  
 To achieve a change in the system (17.0%).  
 Offer of economic aid to the poor (27.0%).

He is the candidate of the poor.  
 Because he understands the situation.  
 He is against the oligarchy.  
 I am bored with the rest and I want to stop the rising cost  
 of living.  
 Rojas is interested in the economic situation of the un-  
 employed.  
 Rojas--we want a change.  
 I do not agree with the government of Lleras.

Pastrana Borrero

To continue the National Front (33.0%).  
 For his program (18.4%).

I vote for Pastrana, for peace and progress.  
 The candidate who offers more guarantees.  
 To continue the work of Lleras.  
 He is from the National Front.  
 He has a policy which coincides with that of the National  
 Front.  
 The others are not acceptable and promise much.  
 He is best prepared to lead the country.  
 So that the country does not fall into civil war.

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Sources: Williams, pp. 154-155 (those with percentages  
 given), and Departamento Administrativo Nacional  
de Estadística.

TABLE X

## TOTAL VOTE BY DEPARTMENT ACCORDING TO TRADITIONAL PARTY LOYALTY

Department	Total Vote		Per Cent Vote		Total Vote		Per Cent Vote	
	Pastrana	Rojas	Pastrana	Rojas	N. F.	Rojas	N. F.	Rojas
<u>LIBERAL PARTY</u>								
Cundinamarca	332,159	329,327	42.1	41.8	466,367	329,327	56.6	41.8
Santander	88,453	126,563	36.2	51.9	115,889	126,563	47.5	51.9
Tolima	74,140	62,401	45.1	38.6	94,507	62,401	57.7	38.6
Atlántico	32,682	63,120	16.3	31.5	137,901	63,120	68.3	31.5
Chocó	19,085	3,932	52.4	10.8	32,461	3,932	89.0	10.8
TOTALS	<u>546,519</u>	<u>585,343</u>	39.6	40.9	<u>846,315</u>	<u>585,343</u>	59.1	40.9
<u>CONSERVATIVE PARTY</u>								
Antioquia	190,842	191,641	41.3	41.5	265,756	191,641	57.5	41.5
Nariño	86,259	35,128	56.7	23.1	116,895	35,128	76.8	23.1
Huila	67,783	27,645	63.7	26.0	78,343	27,645	73.6	26.0
Caldas	<u>118,545</u>	<u>89,734</u>	40.8	31.0	<u>197,293</u>	<u>89,734</u>	68.1	31.0
TOTALS	<u>463,429</u>	<u>344,148</u>	45.9	34.1	<u>658,287</u>	<u>344,148</u>	65.1	34.1
<u>COMPETITIVE</u>								
Valle	157,723	194,746	38.3	47.3	211,041	194,746	51.2	47.3
Boyacá	71,531	110,585	35.9	55.4	87,563	110,585	43.9	55.4
N. Santander	63,873	59,906	46.9	44.8	75,768	59,906	55.6	44.8
Cauca	70,384	26,646	58.8	22.3	92,466	26,646	77.2	22.3
Magdalena	62,125	87,574	25.6	36.1	154,937	87,574	63.8	36.1
Bolívar	80,777	59,621	33.5	24.8	181,054	59,621	75.1	24.8
TOTALS	<u>506,413</u>	<u>539,078</u>	37.5	39.9	<u>802,829</u>	<u>539,078</u>	59.4	39.9

Source: Registraduría Nacional de Estadística.

TABLE XI

## TOTAL VOTE BY DEPARTMENT BY TRADITIONAL PARTY LOYALTY, EXCEPT CAPITAL

Department	Total Vote		Per Cent Vote		Total Vote		Per Cent Vote	
	Pastrana	Rojas	Pastrana	Rojas	N. F.	Rojas	N. F.	Rojas
<u>LIBERAL PARTY</u>								
Cundinamarca	107,753	75,765	47.9	33.7	142,078	75,765	63.1	33.7
Santander	65,484	86,016	37.5	49.2	87,726	86,016	50.2	49.2
Tolima	60,624	46,790	47.8	36.9	76,301	46,790	60.2	36.9
Atlántico	15,904	12,018	23.2	17.5	56,418	12,018	82.3	17.5
Chocó	14,537	2,638	55.5	10.1	23,486	2,638	89.7	10.1
TOTALS	264,302	223,227	42.5	35.9	386,009	223,227	62.1	35.9
<u>CONSERVATIVE PARTY</u>								
Antioquia	117,860	107,543	43.8	39.9	158,613	107,543	58.9	39.9
Nariño	75,306	21,737	61.8	17.8	100,105	21,737	82.1	17.8
Huila	51,844	18,141	64.9	22.7	61,648	18,141	77.1	22.7
Caldas	68,493	50,749	42.3	31.3	109,902	50,749	67.8	31.3
TOTALS	313,503	198,170	49.5	31.3	430,268	198,170	68.0	31.3
<u>COMPETITIVE</u>								
Valle	93,836	119,839	37.4	47.8	127,402	119,839	50.8	47.8
Boyacá	67,461	102,002	36.4	55.0	82,359	102,002	44.4	55.0
N. Santander	46,845	29,068	55.7	34.6	54,884	29,068	65.3	34.6
Cauca	63,625	20,525	63.6	20.5	79,135	20,525	79.1	20.5
Magdalena	47,822	54,430	26.5	30.2	125,524	54,430	69.6	30.2
Bolívar	59,765	29,192	34.6	11.1	143,628	29,192	83.1	11.1
TOTALS	379,354	355,056	38.6	36.5	612,932	355,056	63.0	36.5

Source: Registraduría Nacional de Estadística.

last competitive election in Colombia before 1974), he grouped the departments into strong Liberal areas, strong Conservative areas, and competitive areas where neither party was dominant. The conclusions reached from these tables, however, can only be tentative and subject to further research because of the possibility that these patterns could have changed between 1948 and 1970 due to mortality as well as political change. An additional difficulty in compiling these tables is that the number of departments has changed since the original study was made. In 1960 the departments of Quindío and Risaralda were derived from Caldas, Sucre from Bolívar, and La Guajira and César from Magdalena. For the purposes of these tables, these new departments were re-incorporated into their old structure. Burnett's study did not include any of the departments or territories of the Eastern plains nor some of them in the South, so these have been eliminated from the tables as well.

These tables are both divided into two parts. The left column shows the relationship between Pastrana and Rojas in both raw votes and percentages. The right column indicates the relationship between the three candidates within the National Front combined and Rojas Pinilla. The abbreviation N. F. refers to the combination of the three candidates. Table X encompasses the entire department while Table XI considers the department after the departmental capital has been controlled. This control is made to determine if the

urban areas, a strong area of ANAPO support, made any difference in the results.

From these two tables one can see that Pastrana was successful only in the departments where the Conservatives had been dominant, and then only by a plurality rather than a majority if the entire department is considered. Table X indicated that Rojas Pinilla carried the departments which Burnett found the parties to be competitive and in the areas where the Liberal Party dominated. Table XI shows the same relationship as the previous table; however, each of the percentages are more favorable to Pastrana in the areas of Conservative domination in that he received a plurality in each group where previously he had won in only one. This table also reinforces the findings in previous tables by indicating that the strength of Pastrana lay in the more rural areas of the country. In both tables the relationship between Rojas Pinilla and the combined forces of the National Front candidates showed that the Front was stronger in the Conservative areas than elsewhere, even though they did win a majority in each grouping.

As stated above, this study is by no means a complete analysis of the 1970 presidential election returns, but one based on the data already available. There are several areas of information which should be developed in further survey research. One is the relationship between sex and the voter to determine if the fact that Rojas gave women the right to vote had any effect on this election. Second is a

more recent update on the relationship between party identification and which candidate a person supported. A third is a study of the opinions of people concerning various political leaders, made in an attempt to determine the reasons for disaffection for the National Front.

#### D. Conclusions

This chapter has studied the events after election day to determine what happened, the government's reaction to the events, and other people's reactions to the government measures. These events have given several instances from which a person could strongly suspect that some of the basic precepts of the National Front, as outlined above, had been accomplished. In the face of severe crisis, the traditional parties never indicated that the coalition might dissolve. Instead they cooperated to surmount the crisis through the use of restrained force; that is, they did not over-react to the challenge presented by Rojas Pinilla. They also conducted their operations in the open, allowing frequent publication of correspondence between Rojas and President Lleras. Even though there was a period of introspection after the election within the Conservative and Liberal parties, the leadership of both parties began to take the necessary measures to correct any deficiencies in the party organization or policies. The analysis of the voting data indicated that there was still strong support for the traditional parties and their coalition, although support

for the 1970 candidate was certainly less than overwhelming.

By breaking the vote down into socio-economic and political

characteristics, one can get a better understanding of which

type of people were most likely to have voted against the

National Front, either because of its personalities or of

its policies.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

The Colombian experiment in coalition government has been a unique experience in Latin America in that the participants predetermined the length of time the coalition would last and then incorporated the provisions which established the coalition directly into the national constitution. The Liberal and the Conservative parties had formed this coalition in order to restore political peace and economic order to a country which had been devastated by the Violent Era and the Rojas dictatorship. It has been argued that the goal of the National Front was the establishment of political peace. For all intents and purposes this was achieved in the early 1960s, although economic problems still confronted the government. These problems increased the prospects for a major challenge to National Front rule in the 1970 presidential election.

The election crisis can be broken down into one main element and three catalytic elements. The main element was the near election of a former dictator, Rojas Pinilla, who openly advocated the end of the elite's control over the government. Evidence that Rojas would attempt such a move was already seen in his creation of the Third Force, a new



political party he organized in the 1950s to counteract the power of the Liberal and Conservative parties. One of the catalytic elements was the weakness of the National Front candidate. Pastrana Borrero was the weakest candidate presented by the National Front in that he received the lowest per cent of the votes of any previous Front candidate. The second catalytic element was the economic situation in the country. Even though the elites had made significant progress in rebuilding the economy, much of this improvement was not evident to the masses in the form of higher standards of living. Rojas Pinilla took advantage of the economic situation by advocating a program which at least seemed to offer the lower classes an immediate improvement in their way of life.

One of the consequences of the National Front was an increased incidence of factionalism, the third catalytic element. Granted that both political parties have split in the past, but there seem to have been even more divisions under the National Front than before. Examples of this increased factionalism include the formation of the Liberal Revolutionary Movement from the Liberal Party soon after the National Front was formed, the separate candidacy of Belisario Betancur before the Conservative nominating convention was even held, the additional splintering of the Conservative Party during the nominating convention, and finally the internal struggles within the Liberal Party to determine who was at fault for the relatively poor showing of the Liberals

in the election. Thus it is concluded that the incidence of factionalism under the National Front increased.

Because the Liberal and the Conservative parties had dominated the political life of Colombia for generations, their unification would place the coalition into a similar position as that of a political party under a one-party dominant system, such as exists in Mexico. The campaign style of the National Front throughout most of the campaign was one of the candidate touring the country and explaining his programs to the people and to the local officials while paying virtually no attention to the opposition.

However, once the coalition finally recognized the opposition's potential electoral strength, it reacted by dropping, for the most part, the campaign style it had been using. In its place, the National Front used a style which one would find in a country with a multi-party system; that is, open recognition of the existence of the opposition and efforts to undermine its strength with the electorate. The National Front pursued this new policy with a gradual increase in intensity. That means that at first the elites only made occasional speeches and the newspapers made periodic references to Rojas' misdeeds. However, near election day, the voters were almost constantly being bombarded

with anti-Rojas propaganda through speeches, editorials, advertisements, political cartoons, and other similar measures. One can conclude, therefore, that elites in Colombia react to the challenge of a counter-elite that poses serious threats to their existence by openly confronting the challenger and by applying pressures against him in a gradually increasing manner.

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