One of the few consistent ideological differences between Colombia's two traditional parties revolved around the "religious question." The strongest defenders of the Church were Conservatives while Liberals were the most anti-clerical. The election of Olaya Herrera, a Liberal, as president in 1930 gave hope to those who wanted a more secular country after almost fifty years of Conservative governments allied with the clergy. However, since the presidents of the Liberal Republic wanted to avoid a religious conflict, various anti-clerical militants forced a discussion about the "religious question" in the press and from their political offices. The Church hierarchy felt threatened and decided to organize a National Eucharistic Congress in August 1935 as a collective show of force. The leftist majority in the Bogotá municipal council sent the Congress a disrespectful telegram; their message, and the reaction to it by members of the clergy, solidified the opinions and fears on both extremes in the debate about the Church's role in Colombian society, pushing more moderate voices aside. The opposition became a caricature in the increasingly violent rhetoric and the two sides stopped listening to each other in an atmosphere of mutual fear and mistrust.

Keywords
Liberal Republic, Catholic Church, The Violence, Anticlericalism.