

changes that will ensure that the lessons of history do not go unheeded in Latin America. But what are these lessons, and what do they suggest to us with respect to the allocation of priorities, preferences, and effort within the limited time available? We are all aware of the price that is paid for the inequities in income, social status, and access to political participation characteristic of all less-developed countries—the more so because we now see the effects of these persistent ills even within our own society.

Controversy continues over means and ends, over methods and techniques, over goals and the manipulation of priorities, and so does uncertainty concerning the efficacy of reformist solutions and the relevance of revolutionary action. Meanwhile, slow changes, yet of vast import, *are* taking place in the social orders, economies, and political practices and institutions of many countries of Latin America and the world. Let us hope that none will act according to the Savoyard proverb, “I have so much to do, I am going to sleep.”

## The Import of Ideologies

ANDRE GUNTER FRANK: *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution*.  
New York, Monthly Review, 1969.

CARLOS A. ASTIZ, ED.: *Latin American International Politics*.  
South Bend, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 1969.

PAUL D. BETHEL: *The Losers*.  
New Rochelle, N.Y., Arlington House, 1969.

GASTON GARCIA CANTU: *El socialismo en Mexico, Siglo XIX*.  
Mexico City, Ediciones Eray, 1969.

RODOLFO STAVENHAGEN: *Las clases sociales en las sociedades agrarias*.  
Mexico City, Siglo XXI, 1969.

MARIA ISAURA PEREIRA DE QUEIROZ: *Historia y etnologia de los movimientos mesianicos*.  
Mexico City, Siglo XXI, 1969.

R.A. SOSA FERREYRO: *El crimen del miedo*.  
Mexico City, B. Costa-Amic, 1969.

MANUEL MAGAÑA C.: *Poder laico*.  
Mexico City, Foro Politico, 1970.

**Reviewed by Victor Alba**

THROUGHOUT ITS MODERN HISTORY, Latin America has suffered from a peculiar handicap: its political historians and theorists have interpreted the contemporary Latin American scene on the basis of imported theories originating in societies quite different from those of Latin America. The Spaniards and Portuguese brought with them their own institutions and political and social concepts, although they—particularly the Spaniards—showed great flexibility in applying them. The Latins' ideal of independence was based on French rational-

ism; the political structure on the American model; and the political economy on a mixture of Spanish conservatism, British economic liberalism, French and Spanish political liberalism, and finally Gallic positivism. Perhaps the best explanation for the failure of socialism and anarcho-syndicalism to gain any strong and lasting foothold in Latin America lies in the fact that their exponents tried to transplant ideologies born in a European setting onto Latin American soil with scarcely any attempt to adapt them to local realities. Between the two World

Wars and for a time after World War II, populism was the sole political philosophy that tried to look at Latin America through Latin American eyes.

The sterility of communism in Latin America may be attributed, among other things, to what may be termed its ideological colonialism. Moscow treated the Latin American countries as “semi-colonial” and prescribed tactics which the local Communist parties slavishly applied, thereby isolating themselves from the masses—in fact, from everyone except a limited audience of intellectuals and students. Even now the orthodox Communists submissively apply models prescribed by Moscow.

Dissident Marxist groups in Latin America today—be they Maoists, Neo-Marxists, Castroites, or Trotskyites of various shadings—make the same mistake of applying foreign models, drawn in this case principally from the writings of the French and American New Left. The result is again the complete self-isolation of the Latin American New Left and the existence of a profound contradiction between the dissidents’ theories and their practice (or *praxis*, as it is stylishly termed in servile emulation of Marx’s phraseology).

An example of this importation of ideas and the application of schematic interpretations is to be found in the writings of André Gunter Frank, a German educated in the United States. Frank is an influential economic theoretician among the Latin American New Left, whose books significantly influence the way in which the movement views the contemporary Latin American scene. The fundamental thesis of Frank and the New Left is that Latin American societies are characterized by the existence of a bourgeoisie grafted onto a landholding oligarchy (a thesis supported by the Populists) and at the same time by the existence of a local capitalism linked with, but also rivaling, American capitalism. Latin American Communists pin their hopes on this rivalry to lead to the emergence of national liberation movements supported by what they used to call the “national bourgeoisie” and now refer to as “national capitalism.” The New Left, on the other hand, seeks to destroy this national capitalism, and in so doing it virtually ignores the landed oligarchies. But when military regimes calling themselves “revolutionary” appear and pretend to be carrying out what Marxists would call a bourgeois, anti-feudal revolution, the New Left supports them without any apparent effort to reconcile the supposed existence of a national capitalism (as distinct from the bourgeoisie) and the “revolutionary” military elements’ assertion of

the need to carry out a revolution in order to bring such a national capitalism into being. The nationalistic aspect of such revolutions seemingly blinds them to this contradiction.

Frank’s essays, now collected in one volume, appear scholarly and serious, and they may be convincing to anyone lacking a broad, firsthand knowledge of actual Latin American conditions. But Latin Americans themselves—including even those who subscribe to Frank’s general interpretation—find themselves forced to recognize that one aspect or another of his thesis flies in the face of realities.

In fact, all the books under review—various of which were written by members of the New Left—describe phenomena which are characteristic, not of a capitalist system, but rather of landholding oligarchies with bourgeois enclaves. Whether it is Garcia Cantu’s study of the development of socialism in Mexico in the last century, Magaña’s examination of the progressivist whims of the Mexican Church, Stavenhagen’s description of the agrarian population of Latin America, Pereira de Queiroz’ analysis of the Messianic movements in Brazil, or Sosa Ferreyro’s treatment of the assassination of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, the leader of Mexico’s only socialist movement—all help to form a picture of oligarchic societies with little trace of real capitalism. It could even be said that the international policies of the Latin American countries, as described in the collection of studies compiled by Argentine Professor Astiz, are typical of regimes serving the interests of landowning oligarchies rather than those of capitalism (although these studies generally fail to address themselves to the social realities underlying any diplomacy).

By the same token, the measures adopted by Castro’s regime to consolidate its power—analyzed by Bethel—are no more characteristic of a socialist regime, however much it may try to imitate certain Stalinist models and clothe its actions in revolutionary rhetoric. They are essentially measures which have been practiced, in a less spectacular manner perhaps, by other Latin American dictatorships of the traditional oligarchic type before Castro’s advent to power.

All this is important, not as a mere exercise in semantics, but as a key to political tactics. Action on the political level depends largely on the assessment of fundamental social realities that prompts it. Perhaps a major cause of the political sterility of the New Left in Latin America is to be found in its tendency to rely, as pointed out above, on imported interpretations of reality.

# Reviews in Brief

## *Adeste Fidelistas*

IRVING L. HOROWITZ, JOSUE DE CASTRO, and JOHN GERASSI, Eds.: *Latin American Radicalism. A Documentary Report on Left and Nationalist Movements*. New York, Random House, 1969.

PRIMARY SOURCE materials on Latin American radical and nationalist movements are not readily accessible to general readers in the United States, and to the extent that the present volume helps fill this void it is a welcome contribution. Irving Louis Horowitz, sociologist and editor of *Trans-Action*, and John Gerassi, an angry ex-journalist turned militant, join with Josue de Castro, the Brazilian nutritionist, in presenting twenty-eight essays (including four of their own) which describe, defend, or promote the tenets of a wide spectrum of anti-Establishment or anti-*yanqui* postures in contemporary Latin America.

How to treat the range and variety of the contributions is a dilemma not fully overcome by the editors, who are "linked by an acceptance of broad radical premises for the hemisphere" but disclaim the need for "a unified, systematic approach" in a documentary. The inclusion of interpretative commentaries on the Latin American Left, such as that by Professor John Johnson of Stanford (as well as those of the editors themselves), and the juxtaposition of the moderate, scholarly reflections of Prebisch, Rosenstein-Rodan, Furtado, and Germani alongside the apocalyptic cadences of Castro, Che Guevara, Régis Debray, and Fabricio Ojeda make the volume more an anthology than a documentary.

Coherence is also weakened by the

effort to examine both "nationalist" and "left" doctrines in the same work. Despite considerable overlap, particularly as they perceive the United States' role in Latin America's malaise, the doctrines of Latin American radicalism—whether "classic" or New Left—frequently diverge from the broader tradition of nationalism, which today still ranges all the way from remnants of esthetic and Hispanic anti-Americanism, through the lingering protectionist apologias of middle-class native industrialists, to the programs of the Peruvian military. The organization of the book around three "pivots" (socio-economic, nationalistic, and political-activist) does little to clarify concepts or dispel the potpourri flavor.

Highly valuable inclusions are Rodolfo Stavenhagen's attack on seven familiar intellectual-liberal myths about Latin American society; Merle Kling's detached examination of the place of violence in politics; Emilio Maspero's spirited defense of Christian trade-unionism; an important exposition of Helio Jaguaribe's "developmentalist-nationalist" thesis; and personal testimonials by such revolutionaries as Father Camilo Torres, Guevara, and Ojeda. As for the editors' own contributions, Gerassi's firsthand account of the Latin American Solidarity Conference of 1967 is useful and enlightening, but the others are disappointing. De Castro's commentary is unpretentious and noncommittal in approaching the Great Issues of the Left, while Horowitz' analysis of "permanent illegitimacy" in Latin America does not measure up to the standards of his earlier work on military elites or international stratification. The unrelieved solemnity and righteous indignation pervading most of the selections in the book do scant justice to the flashes of wit and self-deprecation which have frequently

been articulated in other writings or speeches of the militants—militants of a Left that is also Latin. Moreover, important as it is to an understanding of Latin America's New Left, the legacy of opportunism and occasional buffoonery left by the Orthodox Left—which led one wag to remark, "Latin American Marxists may not have done very well by Karl, but they kept the faith with Harpo"—is not touched upon.

There is no selection dealing with the ethics of revolution, despite interesting Latin American discussions of the dilemma posed by Camus: "Every revolutionary ends up being an oppressor or a heretic." Another major shortcoming is the absence of materials suggesting the fertility of the debate among left-nationalists on key concepts such as foreign investment, the role of the military, and levels of violence, or revealing the foibles of the Left on substantive and tactical matters. While the work obviously does not purport to present a balanced symposium, it would have been enlivened by the inclusion of items such as Osvaldo Peralva's accounts of the travails of Brazilian Communists in Moscow in the 1950's; the devastating critique of rural guerrilla theory by Debray's Marxist colleague, Henri Edme (in *Les Temps Modernes* [Paris], May 1966); the revisionist nationalism of Brazilian journalist Gilberto Paim; the tract on urban guerrilla tactics by Carlos Marighela; or the *Consensus of Vina del Mar*. The dimensions and timing of the book no doubt prevented the inclusion of some of these items, but perhaps a select bibliography should have been added in order to convey a better idea of the continuing variety and volatility of the dialogue on the Left.

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