

tinue to operate according to that pattern: students, after graduation, fight their way into the system to become patrons themselves; and even organized labor struggles to defend a system that guarantees it a modicum of benefits and privileges.

One of the author's most interesting chapters is one that discusses particular problems in selected countries, but it also illustrates the most frustrating

aspect of the book, which is the insufficiency of evidence provided to support the author's generalizations. One suspects that Mercier Vega is basically correct in his analysis of Latin American society, even if one cannot accept all of the solutions he proposes and the predictions he makes. However, the author has yet to supply adequate hard data to substantiate his positions.

The Obstacles to Reform

JAMES PETRAS: *Politics and Social Forces in Chilean Development*.
Berkeley, University of California Press, 1969.

CLAUDIO VELIZ, Ed.: *Obstacles to Change in Latin America*.
London, Oxford University Press, 1966.

CARL LEIDEN and KARL M. SCHMITT: *The Politics of Violence: Revolution in the Modern World*.
Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1968.

Reviewed by Arpad J. von Lazar

TALKING ABOUT THE precarious nature of social and political stability in the countries of the less developed world is like incanting a Tibetan prayer: it ought to, and even might, have an effect on the faithful, but, alas, it may also be only an elaboration of the obvious! Social science literature must by now be saturated with studies of economic backwardness, social stagnation, and political decay in the countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The present three volumes demonstrate that economic development may, and probably should, cure these ills, *if* (and only if) the political and social system also manages to keep pace with change.

Both the Veliz volume and Professor Petras' excellent Chilean case study recognize that Latin American political systems generally include only a portion of the populace; that political participation is marginal at best for the vast masses of urban and rural poor, that income distribution is not equitable; and, above all, that efforts at solving these problems have been only partially, if at all, successful.

Professor Petras' presentation shows a rather clear-cut ideological bias, though this may actually be to the good. The neo-Marxian tone helps to place the discussion of reform management in its "natural garb"—it is like reading a well-written work by a Chilean deeply concerned about his country's posture in the developmental process. If this is the price to be paid for getting a highly "relevant" internal view of Chilean development, we should be willing to accept the ideological coloring.

The Petras work is at its best in dealing with the problems of rural social mobilization and the role of the bureaucracy in national politics. Chile's agrarian reform, which has been praised as one of the most fundamental of such programs in Latin American, receives a realistic and extremely perceptive treatment here. Agrarian reform is really meaningless unless supplemented by social changes and reforms designed to bring the *campesino* out of his state of social isolation, political serfdom, and cultural deprivation. And as any good Jesuit or Leninist would contend, the organizational

weapon is the key to change. This is why Petras' treatment of rural social change is so significant in its approach and relevant in its focus. He stresses *campesino* unionization as the key element in providing the peasantry with a social and political club to wield in the highly competitive and much "overheated" Latin American setting where political power and social weight are still a monopoly of those in the middle and upper-middle classes.

What seems questionable in Petras' work is his relatively optimistic view that a kind of "new politics" (new in style and content) is emerging, together with new groups wielding political power and influence. If anything, in this reviewer's opinion, Chile provides proof of the estimate that while some degree of change is taking place, the limits of reform movements in Latin America are clearly set, and drastic and far-reaching changes are hard to imagine at this stage. For some, this conclusion may come with the realization that the masses of Latin America are *not* "on the move;" for others, with recognition that in contemporary Latin American politics, especially of the reformist or revolutionary kind, lofty ideals continue to be sacrificed, more often than not, to expediency.

IT IS PRECISELY these points which are brought into sharp focus by the Veliz volume. The book sheds essential light on the depth of the problems and dilemmas the Latin American peoples face in attempting to cast off the shackles of economic stagnation and social backwardness. It is, indeed, a monumental task for a semi-industrialized, capitalistic system built on the remnants of feudalism to shift to a reform orientation and still manage "to keep the lid on." Most of the contributors to the volume tacitly recognize that the problems are huge, and the solutions put forward acceptable, thus far, only to certain sectors of the body politic. Still, the contributions of the Argentine sociologist Di Tella (on populism and reform), of the Chilean economist Sunkel (on frustration and reform in Chile), and of the Colombian sociologist Fals Borda (on violence and the breakup of tradition in Colombia) are modestly optimistic in tone and action-oriented in what they recommend. They all advocate change—indeed, a degree of change that would have revolutionary implications for the traditional social order—but at the same time they are reluctant to advocate the cheap solutions and easy answers so characteristic of Latin American political extremism. The clarity of thought and intellec-

tual forthrightness of the authors place this volume among the most important contributions to the discussion of the developmental options and priorities facing the Latin American countries in the coming crucial years.

BOTH THE VELIZ AND PETRAS' works skirt the issue of violence and the role of violent revolutionary action in the Latin American setting. But, as social needs, economic demands, and political frustrations grow, so does the potential for the violent expression of popular disaffection and consequent political repression by those in power. The Leiden and Schmitt volume thus performs a useful service in attempting a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of revolutionary action and its relationship to political ideologies. In order to integrate their conceptual treatment with the historical experience of the 20th century, the authors discuss the Mexican, Turkish, Egyptian, and Cuban revolutions.

While the authors' presentation of events is quite sound, the reader has the feeling of sinking into a morass of historical specificity. This is not to suggest that the particulars of time, circumstance, cultural background, and "acts of God" are less important than the factors influencing the economic system and its functioning, or the patterns of social stratification or mobility. The point is that the elitist nature of some revolutions tends to obscure—or at least diminish our awareness of—everyday political actions of a revolutionary nature occurring, so to speak, under our very eyes. The magnetic and explosive role played by the charismatic leader is unquestionable; but so is the fact that the organizational ability and numerical strength of community-level political and economic institutions are beginning more and more to replace the glamour as well as the social irresponsibility of revolutionary intellectuals with their ideological dreams of societal perfection. So it is really the first part of this book, which deals conceptually with the problems of revolutionary action, that has the most to offer. The case studies are something of a letdown with their brief and simplistic presentations and their attempts to find convenient explanations for purposes of categorization.

HAVING READ THESE THREE fine volumes, one is left with an impression of social paralysis coupled with a sense of the extreme urgency of effecting

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