

## Review Article

### EXPLOSION AND REVOLUTION

Out of a colloquium entitled "Conference on Tensions in Development in the Western Hemisphere" came a collection of twenty essays published for the Council on World Tensions, a private non-partisan organization with headquarters in New York City.\* The Council conducts studies and international conferences on practical steps to take towards peaceful international relations. At the recent Conference held in Salvador, Brazil, in co-operation with the University of Bahia, some seventy leaders assembled from various parts of the world. Those attending were educators, economists, business men, and government officials. The then International Executive Chairman of the Council was Mr. Lester B. Pearson. The volume containing the essays is edited by Mildred Adams, a correspondent for *The Economist* of London, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Foreign Policy Association. Two contributors are the former Presidents of Ecuador and of Costa Rica. Another, Eduardo Frei Montalva, Chilean Senator and former cabinet minister, is a leading candidate in the presidential elections scheduled for the autumn of 1964 in his country. Economists Victor Urquidi of Mexico, Mario Simensen of Brazil, and Egido Ortona of Italy, comment respectively on "Legislation for Economic Development", "The Role of Government and Free Enterprise", and "Europe and The Common Market". Luis Prieto, a founder of the Accion Democratica party in Venezuela (winner with candidates Betancourt and Leoni in the last two presidential elections) is the author of a chapter on "Education for Latin America". Two United States Ambassadors, Lincoln Gordon and Chester Bowles, the former at Rio de Janeiro, the latter at New Delhi, contributed "Inter-American Tensions and the Alliance for Progress" and "A New Deal for Latin America". The Colombian Ambassador to Rome, Germán Arciniegas, the Costa Rican Ambassador to Israel, and the Brazilian Ambassador to Washington also participated. Others who wrote single chapters were Felipe Herrera, President of the Inter-American Development Bank, and Daniel Cosío Villegas, former President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Unhappily, the galaxy of famous names has produced neither a consensus nor a clarification regarding the question asked in the title of the book. The average commentary of ten or a dozen pages is inadequate to convey a well-developed opinion or

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\**Latin America: Evolution or Explosion?* Ed. Mildred Adams. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1963. Pp. viii, 277. \$4.00 (Paperback, \$1.95).

philosophy of one person, much less to encompass a diversity of views, a comparative evaluation, a critical analysis, and an acceptable recommendation for action. The volume does not yield either a thorough diagnosis—for there are wide omissions in the fields of military affairs, astronomical population increases, political stability and responsibility (or the lack of them), agriculture, mass media, and the flight of capital—nor anything approaching a clear-cut prognosis. Although the many omissions preclude a definitive understanding of Latin American problems, a perusal of this book is none the less rewarding for its separate and distinct vignettes of Latin American turmoil.

Galo Plaza in "Problems of Education in Latin America" is able from his background of student days at the Universities of California, Maryland, and Columbia in the United States, to make pertinent comparisons between North American and South American education. The latter is characterized as aristocratic in purpose, centralized in control, with uniformity its pattern. Yet he reminds his readers that "at least a score of Universities in Latin America are older than Harvard". (One was founded in 1538.) He points out that following the struggles against the crown and clerical power in colonial and revolutionary periods, Latin American universities zealously protected their political and intellectual autonomy. He adds: "All this makes for a politically charged atmosphere on the campus, but it has not contributed to the improvement of academic standards. The students in their struggle to protect the university from the political instability surrounding it have achieved the opposite effect by bringing politics into the classroom." It must be observed that both in this and in the succeeding chapter by Sr. Luis Prieto, there are duplicating sections devoted in each case to primary, secondary, higher, and adult education. This is perhaps the outstanding—but by no means the only—example of repetition which diminishes the value of the book. A further defect in this, as in other joint ventures, is the tendency of each essayist to give the context of his views by a review of Latin American history. For the reader, the result is not only repetitive, but also fragmentary, having no common base of time or place.

Of particular interest to Canadians is the summary chapter by Reynold Carlson, the representative in Brazil of the Ford Foundation (which subsidized the Conference at Salvador). In it he states, "A short review of nationalism in the Northern Hemisphere, and of tensions between Canada and the United States, yielded the interesting observation that while foreign investment in Canada is largely from the United States and 75 to 80 per cent of certain industries in Canada are controlled by the United States, this does not overly worry the Canadians. On the contrary, Canada accepts the responsibility for keeping the corporations in order and under control, while profiting from their presence within her borders."

Mr. Pearson, writing before he assumed office as Prime Minister, in a short introductory chapter "The Essence of the Problem", warns of the strong temptation to self-deception and wishful thinking. He then remarks upon the disparities between North and South America, and between different sectors within the South American countries.

He expresses the opinion that a broader association with the European Common Market could bring to Latin America desirable consequences and stresses the need for speed in meeting the challenge of rising expectations "in the race between evolution and explosion." In lighter vein he writes: "Remember also, we can always blame the Americans for our own mistakes. This is another indispensable service the United States performs. We should not, however, presume upon it too much."

Perhaps one anticipates too much in reading the names of the contributors. But another lost opportunity lies in the failure to explain or even to hint at the alternatives sought in the title of the volume. What does "explosion" mean? Is the alternative to evolution a violent revolution? is it fascism? Peronism? Castroism? Nasserism? Socialism? Militarism? Dictatorship? We are left in the dark. Even in the conclusion there is a begging of the question, as Carlson expresses *hope* for a coalition of power to produce evolution rather than explosion, simultaneously asserting that a strategy in ideology needs to be devised by Latin America and that there must be changed attitudes by the élite and the power classes. Does this answer the question raised in the original, piquant title of the book?

The Canadian journalist Gerald Clark, associate editor of *The Montreal Star*, comes a trifle closer to a definition of terms and of alternatives\* In every Latin American country, he writes, he met social reformers who insisted that if the present order does not provide for essential needs, then they "will look to any promising system, whether it is called fascism, Fidelismo, or communism. This is the real danger". Later he alludes to the Latin Americans' belief that the next step must be socialism. At the same time he doubts that American opinion-makers and business men understand that social democracy is, as he asserts, the only hope for saving Latin America from communism (p. 398). Indeed, he perceives no alternative to social democracy, for "if nations continue to be directed, as many of them are at present, by faltering leaders, the certain outcome will be chaos" (p. 415). But here, at the close of the book, there is no recall of other alternatives that had previously been suggested. Earlier, Clark declared as a considered judgment that conditions in Latin America combine to foster military rule, and that "the big imponderable for the future is whether the social structure of much of Latin America will be of a right- or left-wing nature, implemented, at least initially, by men in uniform. In view of the social forces operating, a middle road seems unlikely" (p. 182). The alternatives, then, by arithmetical count-down, are (1) fascism; (2) Fidelismo; (3) communism; (4) social democracy; (5) chaos; (6) military

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\**The Coming Explosion in Latin America*. By Gerald Clark. New York: David McKay [Toronto: The Musson Book Company, Ltd.], 1963. Pp. xi, 436. \$6.75.

rule; (7) right wing; (8) left wing; and (9) an unlikely middle road. This places almost no limit on conjecture or on consistency of presentation.

One chapter's inquiry "Alliance for Progress?" foreshadows the scepticism—which he obviously shared—which the author encountered in his travels and interviews. He is correct in stating that the Charter of the Alliance, signed at Punta del Este, Uruguay, on August 17, 1961, five months after President Kennedy's proposal, committed Latin American governments to two basic structural changes: land tenure and tax reform. But there were other equally important provisions in the Charter regarding national plans for economic development, commodity agreements, regional customs unions, trade policy, and farmers' co-operatives, which Clark barely mentions. To list even a portion of the Charter's objectives is at once to disclose a serious handicap to their achievement: too many goals, dispersing attention and effort of too many governments in too many directions at too fast a pace, with too few resources of people, equipment, plans, and money. The author points out that the Alliance neglected to take into account the die-hard attitude of oligarchs and politicians "who simply would not support legislation designed to cut their personal profit margins". Large amounts of foreign private investment that were contemplated have not been forthcoming. At the same time little or nothing has been done to stop the flight of Latin America's own capital, which for varied reasons arising out of political instability and threats of nationalization (and perhaps fear of new, proposed taxes) seeks haven abroad. State planning has been disappointing. Reorganization of administrative and management personnel of the Alliance has taken place repeatedly.

Salvador Allende, leader of the Chilean Socialist party—a candidate of the Socialist-Communist coalition in the 1964 elections—is quoted as follows: "The Alliance is like putting on a mustard plaster to cure pneumonia in this era of antibiotics". Clark counters with the account of the conviction in 1962 of a Chilean for income-tax evasion, which made headlines around the continent because it was the first case of its kind ever to occur in Latin America. Then in more sober tones he declares that in the final analysis the question is whether Latin America has accepted its own responsibilities under the Alliance. The implication is that the reply is negative. Concluding with the Alliance, Mr. Clark repeats the thoughtful evaluation of *The Reporter* magazine, that the Alliance is seeking to buy revolutionary change without paying the price of a revolution. His own judgment is that the United States is offering an honourable and imaginative project, but has not overcome any of the basic obstacles to its success.

As "Fidelismo has become the greatest single force in this society of 200 million people", references to Cuba and to Fidelismo permeate the whole of Clark's treatise. He was an eye-witness in 1960, 1961, and 1962 to the changing faces of the Cuban revolution. During his 1960 stay in Havana he was displaced from his hotel room by Sergei Koudriavtzev, the secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa during the 1940's who was named by Igor Gouzenko as the organizer of a spy ring. Clark interviewed Che Guevara,



and other revolutionaries and government officials, and made trips around the countryside, talking with students, farmers, and passersby. He describes Castro followers as eager, convinced, dedicated, ecstatic with youthful enthusiasm sometimes bordering on hysteria, a hard nucleus who see the regime as the salvation of their country. Nor is there doubt as to Castro's objective to export the revolution, since he boasts openly of the creation in Latin America of a "single, great nation, free and independent". As to Cuba's future, it is Clark's view that just as Washington has confidence in its strategy of economic isolation of Cuba, the Russians are convinced that the policy will fail. Despite contending with the vagaries of the Russians and Chinese, Cuba is not isolated as was Communist Russia during its early years. To Clark (note the hedging), "the basic questions, short of invasion or internal uprising, are whether the regime will blend its dogma with more liberal ideas adopted from the West, and whether, internationally, some sort of neutralism can be achieved . . . . basically the revolution came from within . . . . Cuba's potential impact on the rest of Latin America can be confined to the island's shores, provided Latin American governments themselves are prepared to accept the lesson."

Presumably applicable to Cuba as well as to the remainder of Latin America are the author's recommendations: the gravity of the situation demands a "desperate, almost ruthless gamble" by the United States, i.e., "radical surgery, with all its obvious risks, is essential. This surgery involves United States intervention in every form; hidden if possible, overt or active if necessary" (p. 413). This, despite the acknowledged phobia of Latin Americans regarding intervention. Furthermore, he proposes training revolutionaries, perhaps in Mexico, who would be the evangelists "to overthrow undesirable regimes". (Mr. Pearson, in remarking in Miss Adams' book upon the withdrawal of aid from a Latin country, said even "this would be a form of American intervention, and that is taboo".) To this reviewer, the consequences of interventions in past decades in the Caribbean are nothing less than tragic, both for the countries involved and for the United States. And as a practical matter, in view of the rise of nationalism in Latin American societies, for how long would a successor government remain in power, having been installed through United States intervention? How often, and for how long would repeated interventions be required to re-establish and maintain regimes "desirable" to the United States? To ask these questions is to suggest the answer.

In view of these forebodings of "explosion", what should be the policy of Canada? Clark is surprisingly silent. He cites statistics on Cuban-Canadian trade. Should it be increased, or reduced? No comment. He praises efforts to revitalize Brazil's poverty-ridden Northeast. Does he deem it advisable that Canada should help? Only silence. He states that funds for regional bureaus of *Prensa Latina* (Castro's news and propaganda agency) are transferred from Havana by way of the Royal Bank of Canada's headquarters in Montreal. Is this to be praised or deplored? In Washington, Clark declares, there is a mood of urgency. Does he think that there should be, or should not be, a mood

of urgency in Ottawa? Not a word. Although abundantly free—even vehement—in offering advice to other governments, of both North and South America, there is none for his own. But if Clark ignores his country's policy towards Latin America, the reverse can not be said, as may be demonstrated from a single example. Late in 1963 President Herrera of the Inter-American Development Bank spent some time in Canada, conferring with high government and banking officials and speaking to important audiences around the country regarding closer ties between his institution and the financial circles of Canada, and arousing interest in greater markets in Latin America for Canada's exports.

It is with relief that one turns from Miss Adams' evolutions, tensions, and putative explosions, and from Mr. Clark's shrill advocacy of a desperate gamble, to the calm, scholarly, and eminently fair evaluation of a revolution that is in fact taking place. Doubling as editor, Dudley Seers with another Cantabrigian, Richard Jolly, collaborates with two Chileans, Andres Bianchi and Max Nolff, in a comprehensive analysis of the early years of the first Marxist state of the hemisphere.\* Seers has held teaching assignments in economics at Oxford and Yale Universities, and now occupies an important post in the United Nations. Jolly took advanced economic studies at Yale. Nolff is a former editor of the Chilean journal *Panorama Economico*, and like Seers, is in the employ of the United Nations. Bianchi deserted the law in favor of economics, studying and teaching at Yale and in Chile. The relatively unknown quartette will share in deserved recognition for this successful and well organized joint effort.

A Preface and a lengthy opening chapter, "The Economic and Social Background", are by Seers. "Part I: Agriculture" is covered by Bianchi in two chapters. "Part II: Education" encompasses chapters iv through viii by Jolly, dealing with the literacy campaign, and the combined educational-indoctrination program of the Castro government. In "Part III: Industry", Max Nolff writes of the industrial practices and prospects of the Cuban communists. (Agriculture was neglected in the Adams symposium, and industry was mostly ignored by Clark, the word not appearing in his index.) The four authors conducted their research on the spot, using—and discounting—official statistics and statements, and obviously working together very closely.

Seers sets the example, happily followed by his colleagues, of calm analysis, in jargon-free terminology. His professional interest in the Cuban experience was aroused because it represents an attempt to achieve broadly the same objectives—fast growth and a more equal society—as those adopted in the Charter of the Alliance for Progress. (But by such different means!) Before Castro, the Cuban sugar economy was stagnant after three decades of large-scale unemployment. The proportion of children in primary schools in the 1950's was lower than in the 1920's. Organized labour resisted measures to increase

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\**Cuba: The Economic and Social Revolution*. Ed. Dudley Seers. Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1964. Pp. xx, 422. \$7.50.

productivity. People were short of food and work but land lay idle and factories were not built. The antagonisms of the extremely rich and poor were repeated in the inequities between country and city. The administrative system was inefficient and corrupt. While these conditions prepared the public to welcome a radical change, the Cuban revolution had advantages unknown to other Communist groups that seized power. There was little war devastation, and large segments of the farm workers were accustomed to organized and paid employment. And there were other Communist countries, at a fortuitous moment when Soviet policy was increasingly emphasizing higher standards of living, that were strong enough and willing to help. The revolution took over an unsound economy. Conversion to a socialist system, and therefore the achievement of self-sufficiency and industrialization, was not to be easy.

Indicative of the wealth of information to be found in this volume are 34 pages devoted to 550 footnotes, and 120 statistical tables and charts. The tables range widely: comparisons of agricultural prices before and after Castro, the number of employees in the many establishments of the Ministry of Industry, and a syllabus of social studies used in schools. One should not assume that the 50 pages of appendices or the contents of the tables are dry or unexciting. On the contrary, they contain much Cuban flavour and Communist passion. For example, the social studies syllabus' first conclusion is: "The Batista tyranny, as a product and tool of imperialism, served to impose upon our people a regime of brutal oppression which guaranteed to the utmost the exploitation of our riches by the American monopolies". This is hardly less startling than the last of the conclusions: "The Cuban revolution constitutes a contribution to world peace". The same appendix reveals that of the 42 books published in 1961 by the National Press of Cuba, four were by Lenin, three by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and others by Karl Marx, Mao Tse-tung, Lu-Sin, Ilin, Rozhin, Kuznetzov, Ostravski, Furmanov and Smirnov. Does the youngster taking an examination in arithmetic add objects or subtract numbers? One question, typical of others, reads: "The Ku Klux Klan was founded in the United States in 1886 to maintain by terror the supremacy of the white race. For how many years has this infamous society existed in our neighbour's land?". In the appendix on industry, Table 8 is five pages in length, with precise lists of the amounts of investments scheduled for new industrial plants until 1970, with the dates for starting operations, and the country of origin of the equipment. (No country outside the Sino-Soviet bloc is in the list of suppliers.) Equally compact and significant are the footnotes. Referring to groups that oppose the revolution, Seers observes that the nationalization of property has reduced their incomes. The footnote is explicit: "Though in many cases they draw life pensions as compensation. One hundred and eighteen thousand who formerly owned houses for letting receive a total monthly pension of \$6,000,000." This is an average of less than \$51. Many of the statistical data come from United Nations sources.

It is Mr. Seers' opinion that there has been an improvement in the lot of the rural



workers, reduced rents, increased literacy and social security. But there is scarcity of food and other goods, restraint on the pay and mobility of workers, an end of religious education, suppression of political opposition and of mass media criticism, and loss, by emigration, of badly needed professional and technical skills.

There have been many errors in planning and administering the program of industrialization. Seers concludes that it will take years to solve organizational problems that permeate the state-run economy. Contrary to both the Russian and the Chinese models is the attempt to raise consumption standards before expanding heavy industry. And both of these objectives depend heavily on increased productivity. The latter, in turn, can be strongly affected by the incentives that are available to the workers. In his evaluation, Seers questions whether a tropical country with a largely uneducated labour force, acquisitive in the past, can build a future on highly centralized planning and an appeal to people to work for the common good. He asserts that even with the advent of a complete political change, many aspects of the revolution are irreversible. Social security and increased educational opportunities are facts, as are the awakened aspirations of the people. These facts would have to be dealt with by any government successor to the communists.

Miss Adams' editorial task of achieving consensus or even a coherent pattern out of twenty essays was made all but impossible by reason of the stature and diversity of the contributors. The Seers task was to introduce and summarize the product of four congenial young men jointly dedicated to searching for facts and trends rather than to the advocacy of an ideology or of an action program. The Adams symposium is diffuse: it deals with a continent. Clark's target was the same, but without the safeguard of colleagues to restrain him from rash proposals. Seers focussed on just one country, and for a limited time-span. Clark's own views he ascribes to Latin Americans, probably erroneously: "Latin America needs heavy infusions of state planning of the European variety—democratic and socialist . . . only by radical measures will greater excess, communism, or Fidelismo, be avoided." In urging United States intervention "in every form", Clark opts for the *bête noire* of all Latin nationalists. Furthermore, he forgets that the United States has committed itself to non-intervention repeatedly, several times in the form of treaties, which are the supreme law of the land.

The Adams volume presents varied and differing points of view; Clark is strictly *sui generis*; Seers' is dispassionate, scientific in its explorations, and cautious in its value judgments. After reading the first two volumes one feels that catch-words in the titles raised questions which are left unanswered. The third book offers satisfaction to the reader's intellectual curiosity. Both Adams and Clark point up the responsibilities of the Latin Americans themselves, and more particularly the urgent necessity for changed attitudes by the oligarchs and the power élite. Seers proves it.

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