

some of these groups have constituted vital forces for reform. Their effectiveness, however, has often depended upon the amount of reform which the capital-possessing groups would tolerate. But, even a large middle sector is no guarantee of peaceful change. A 1963 report of the United Nations Bureau of Social Affairs noted that the Latin American middle sectors were highly unstable and ridden with social tensions. In addition, these groups were described as constituting, in some countries, a retarding element to economic growth and social change. This was especially true for middle-sector groups which adopted upper-class values. Thus, the role of the middle sectors is a contradictory one, and the direction which it takes in the future will generally depend upon the objective conditions of social and economic power in each country. But these groups may well be the ones to make the crucial decision between peaceful or forcible change.

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## ***Discussion Continued:***

### **3. Alfred Stepan**

DISCUSSIONS OF THE "MIDDLE CLASS" in Latin America have usually been muddled by an unexamined transfer of the concept of *class* from one cultural context to another. In England and the United States, the rise of the middle class has historically been associated with increased equality in society, economic dynamism, and greater political stability because of greater social cohesion. As a result, the concept "the role of the middle class" has slowly crept into developmental literature as an independent variable associated with modernization.

This seemed to be the assumption John J. Johnson made in *Political Change in Latin America*.<sup>1</sup> This was a pioneering book whose main contribution was to document the existence of middle groups in Latin American society, and to deflate the ruling orthodoxy of the time that Latin America was composed only of a small aristocracy and a giant lower class, with no significant middle class in between. Johnson came close to a correct description in calling his new groups "middle sectors." His middle sectors are a residual category of people into which is placed those who are neither upper nor working class. It is thus essentially a stratification criterion.

However, confusion arose later when analysts assumed that those middle sectors were the functional equivalent of the European middle class. It was implicitly assumed that Latin America will experience the same political and economic dividends from the new middle sectors as did England and the United States from their middle classes—an inference which is not, in fact, valid. A truly comparative analysis shows that the "middle class" is very different in Latin America, and does not form the cohesive group it did in other countries.

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1. John J. Johnson, *Political Change in Latin America: The Emergence of the Middle Sectors* (Stanford University Press, 1958).

The Anglo-Saxon middle class was not merely a stratified group but a distinct class, with a set of bourgeois values essentially opposed to the aristocratic value system. It was a revolutionary class not merely because it was a new and large group whose wealth and occupations fell between the upper and lower groups, but because it had economic and social goals which were antipathetical to the traditional ruling class. It contained, in addition, a large number of entrepreneurs so that as a class it aided economic growth.

In Latin America, however, the growth of the middle sectors has been greatest in the bureaucracy, import and export trading, and in those import substitution industries where existence is dependent on government protective tariffs. These groups may be middle class in occupation and wealth, but they are related functionally to the *existing* social structure, and their growth has been dependent on their close ties with the government. Far from developing their own values, the middle sectors have attempted to emulate the existing elites in values and in goals. They have used their political power to entrench their social privileges rather than to challenge the status quo, until some Latin American countries have become the only underdeveloped countries in the world where a greater percentage of people are engaged in secondary services than in primary production.

WHILE JAMES PETRAS, in his article in *New Politics*, did not claim for the middle sectors in Latin America a revolutionary role, he did claim such a role for another class of people, the working people: ". . . only the interests and outlooks of the working class coincide with the interests of democracy, economic development and national independence. . . ."<sup>2</sup> My objection in this contribution to the debate is to the blanket use of categories of class, whether middle or working, when analyzing the complex political systems of Latin America. Detailed country-by-country analysis shows that the working class is no more a cohesive and definite value group in Latin America than are the middle sectors. Just as in the middle sectors, some elements of the working class are functionally related to the existing status quo, while other elements are not and will provide some challenge to the government. The dock workers in Brazil, for instance, for most of the post-World War II period, were so completely dependent on government subsidies and sinecures that they could only be viewed as part of the status quo. The real question, when one looks at Latin America, is how to arrive at a government which has sufficient support to implement a sustained economic development plan and to expand participant democracy. The key variable then becomes not one of class but of *coalitions*—coalitions between groups from the working and middle sectors who are for the status quo, and coalitions between people from the various sectors who are for reform.

The distinguished Brazilian social scientist Hélio Jaguaribe, in 1962, classified Brazilian society into twelve groups on the basis of their attitudes toward the existing social and political system and toward the means they advocate to accomplish economic development.<sup>3</sup> What is revealing about the attitudes of his twelve sectors is that they clearly show natural coalitions which

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2. James Petras, "The Latin American Middle Class," *New Politics*, Vol. IV, Winter 1965, p. 84.

cut across the traditional "middle," "upper," and "working" class boundaries. In his analysis, the rural landowners, the professional urban middle class, the urban blue collar government worker and the government-protected strategic unions, such as the railroad union, had all arrived at a *modus vivendi* with the going political system, and were not in favor of drastic social or economic reform. This analysis, based on attitudes toward reform, is far more revealing than a strictly class analysis. Working people in Brazilian politics in reality do not demonstrate a consistent attitude to reforms, but instead often form compromising coalitions. When, for example, the 15-year dictatorship of Vargas came to an end in 1945, Vargas created not one, but two political parties from among his followers. The PSD party was composed of the members of Vargas' state machines, who were in fact the traditional rural landlords. The PTB party was formed from those labor leaders loyal to Vargas and directly benefiting from him. The important fact is that to this day these two parties, with completely different recruitment patterns, have both functioned successfully within the status quo, and have usually managed to arrive at a working coalition with each other. On both analytic and historical grounds, it is an oversimplification to ascribe to any large group in Latin America a monolithic attitude toward reform.

I suggest that the term "class," as a tool of analysis in Latin America, be rigorously redefined or else dropped, because its use is usually more misleading than informative. I propose to take, in ending this brief contribution to the debate, three of the most dynamic questions of Latin America's evolution—the role of increased university education, the role of the organized Peasant Leagues in Brazil, and the role of the military—to show how past analyses in terms of class have led to faulty evaluations, and to illustrate my objections to any debate restricted to a class analysis.

To take first the question of education, universities throughout Latin America are increasing their enrollment and are taking in more students whose parents are urban workers. It has been assumed by analysts who see class origins as the key variable in determining behavior, that these students will emerge as a mobile professional cadre opposed to the status quo. However, attitudinal surveys conducted by K. H. Silvert and Frank Bonilla at the University of Buenos Aires revealed that while these students are mobile, they are mobile *toward* traditional attitudes.<sup>4</sup> In the field of medicine, for example, the student not only acquires skills and attitudes that allow him to function as a professional in the present system, it also gives him a high expectation of personal success. The net effect of increased mobility in this case, therefore, is not to alter the status quo but to reinforce it.

A second important question in Latin America relates to the Peasant Leagues of Northeastern Brazil. The organization of these Leagues has been taken by many to be an archetypal class movement, which threatens the very foundations of land tenure in Brazil. However, a researcher affiliated to

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3. Hélio Jaguaribe, *Desenvolvimento Econômico e Desenvolvimento Político* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Funda da Cultura, 1962), pp. 198–202.

4. K. H. Silvert and Frank Bonilla, *Education and the Social Meaning of Development: A Preliminary Statement* (New York: American Universities Field Staff, 1961), pp. 130–158, (mimeographed).

UNESCO, Benno Galjert, concluded after field study that the Peasant Leagues were not primarily a class organization with cohesive class goals, but rather "followings" of political leaders that aimed at getting specific favors from the government for their individual Leagues.<sup>5</sup> Since the leaders were pressing specific claims, and the government had limited resources, the Leagues were often not cohesive but competitive. Francisco Julião, the most famous of the Peasant League leaders, was himself a landowner whose own land was not organized. Essentially he was using the League to further his own political career, and he worked closely within the political structure. He was elected first to the State Legislature of Pernambuco, and later became a Federal Deputy, a post which gave him a springboard into national politics.<sup>6</sup> It is precisely because the Leagues were "followings" rather than an autonomous class movement that they were so easily silenced at the time of the army coup in March 1964.

To take finally the Latin American military, one of the most important debates among Latin Americanists at the moment concerns the direction in which the military is developing. Probably the most influential analysis is again that of John J. Johnson. In his book, *The Military and Society in Latin America*, he argues that officers make decisions on the basis of their personal rather than institutional experience, and will continue to do so, at least until the armed services become considerably more professional. Since the officer corps is progressively being drawn from lower socio-economic strata he concludes that "there is absolutely nothing in the evolution of the Latin American armed forces to suggest that they will for much longer hold off the mob power of the left."<sup>7</sup> This class-based analysis overlooks the role that institutional self-preservation plays in the Latin American military.

If we turn to Brazil again, we discover that the army finally turned against Goulart in March of 1964 mainly because Goulart replaced Navy Minister Silvo Borges when Borges tried to discipline some mutinous enlisted men who favored Goulart. In a solid decision the armed forces rejected the idea that any President should interfere in their disciplinary problems. In his excellent study of the seven military coups that have occurred in Latin America between March 1962 and March 1964, Edwin Lieuwen concluded that the military in Brazil and in the six other countries were not motivated by their class origins but acted primarily to prevent the "coming to power of civilian political groups they considered inimical to the interests of the armed forces."<sup>8</sup>

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5. Benno Galjert, "Class and Following in Rural Brazil," *América Latina*, (Rio de Janeiro), Julho-Setembre de 1964, pp. 3-24.

6. Anthony Leeds, "Brazil and the Myth of Francisco Julião," in *Politics of Change in Latin America*, edited by Joseph Maier and Richard W. Weatherhead (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 195.

7. John J. Johnson, *The Military and Society in Latin America*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp. 254-255.

8. Edwin Lieuwen, *Generals vs. Presidents: Neo-Militarism in Latin America* (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 107.

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# The New Left—Three Views

I. DENNIS HALE:

## THE PROBLEM OF IDEOLOGY

IT IS NO SECRET that the distinguishing characteristic of the American college student and his college has been their studied unconcern for any issues lying beyond the frontiers of academia. The great movements and issues of the age have left the Ivy Walls as firm as ever, planted solidly in the nineteenth century. The result—or cause—of the isolation of the university has been, for the student at least, a frame of mind that might be called “careerism,” the desire to take one’s place in the system as quickly (and as painlessly) as possible. Despite our public attacks upon “vocationalism” in education, we have fostered a vision of learning as the handmaiden to the corporations and professions of middle class life, and we have expected our students to shed any traces of social criticism for the more comfortable garments of the technocrat. Conformity—not only political, but intellectual, religious, and sexual conformity as well—has been and is the hallmark of all but a few American colleges. It is this background that must be borne in mind as we consider the “new student activism” of the late fifties and early sixties, for its origins lie as deep in the oppressively dull atmosphere of the university as in the injustices of American society.

Norman Mailer once wrote that one of the reasons motivating students who go South to work for civil rights is the incredible boredom of a normal middle class adolescence. The civil rights movement has aroused in the American student the long dormant feeling that the life of the world has something more substantial to offer than graduate school and split-level homes. American youth had been offered little else: it had been taught that all the world’s significant battles had been fought and won, and that we were now entering upon a rosy new era of love amidst abundance. The proper attitude, naturally, was to be joy; the proper expression on one’s face one of quiet optimism. All the old pieties were invoked to cover over the obvious contradictions of the new myth. Were there poor in the Garden? Yes, but they were lazy and immoral and no doubt deserved their lower status. Typical of the mentality of the time was the treatment of America’s One Great Social Problem, juvenile delinquency. The delinquent was alternately treated as a criminal or a maniac, but never as a genuine rebel.

But beneath all the rhetoric the unpleasant facts were multiplying with embarrassing speed—at home and abroad. The dispossessed were demanding a hearing—in Asia, in the Congo, in Cuba, and, inevitably, in Montgomery, Alabama. The Negro revolt was a breath of fresh air in the intellectual sick-room that American education had become, and the students responded with all the pent-up energy and emotion they had been taught to repress.

The accomplishments of the student movement in its middle phase are impressive—HUAC is dead, if not gone; the Negro revolt has succeeded in