

Moscow and Peking in Latin America

By Yale H. Ferguson

J. GREGORY OSWALD and ANTHONY J. STROVER, Eds.: *The Soviet Union and Latin America*. New York, Praeger Publishers, 1970.

STEPHEN CLISSOLD, Ed.: *Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1918-68: A Documentary Survey*. London, Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1970.

ROBERT G. CARLTON, Ed.: *Soviet Image of Contemporary Latin America: A Documentary History, 1960-1968*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1970.

CECIL JOHNSON: *Communist China and Latin America, 1959-1967*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1970.

THESE FOUR VOLUMES, all published in 1970, are useful additions to the scholarly literature on Soviet and Chinese Communist involvement in Latin America. Happily, they complement one another nicely. The first is an anthology of papers presented in Munich in May 1968 at an international symposium sponsored by the Institute for the Study of the USSR. The second is a collection of some 200 speeches, communiques, press reports, etc.—about one-fourth dated prior to World War II—which the editor, Stephen Clissold, has gleaned from numerous Soviet and Latin American sources and put into perspec-

tive with a comprehensive introduction. The third, issued under the auspices of the Conference on Latin American History, offers a cross-section of recent writings by Soviet specialists on various aspects of Latin American affairs. The fourth analyzes Maoist ideology as a framework for Chinese activities in the Western hemisphere and also examines in detail Sino-Cuban relations and the evolution of pro-Chinese parties throughout Latin America.

The Oswald-Strover, Clissold, and Johnson volumes will be of interest both to students of the USSR and Communist China and to Latin Americanists, not least because of their in-depth treatment of Cuban policy as a largely independent phenomenon. Indeed, in view of the amount of attention that they devote to the Castro regime, they might better have been titled something like "The Soviet Union (or Communist China), Cuba, and Latin America." The Carlton collection, however, will be of utility primarily to specialists in Soviet affairs. Regrettably, his skimpy editorial commentary fails to identify clearly the Soviet writers to whom he refers or to establish the exact relationship between their views and those of the USSR's political leadership; hence, the book will be of most value to readers knowledgeable enough to do so for themselves.

Clissold's introduction to his own collection and his essay in

Oswald and Strover (hereafter referred to as O & S) do not contain any startling new insights, but they do provide a helpful historical survey of Soviet policies. Soviet leaders, he maintains, have generally regarded Latin America as firmly within the United States' sphere of influence and therefore as a region of relatively low priority for the USSR. Nevertheless, recognizing that "even a limited extension of [Soviet] influence in this sensitive area—the proverbial 'backyard' of the United States—might have telling effects," they have not been prepared to write Latin America off entirely.

Clissold reminds us that efforts to extend Soviet influence in Latin America began as early as 1919 and over the years have involved: (a) attempts to establish a pattern of friendly relations—including formal diplomatic ties, cultural exchanges, and trade—with at least some existing governments; and (b) moral and material support for—and ideological dictation to—Moscow-oriented Communist parties. As he points out, the Kremlin's efforts on these two essentially different levels proved incompatible during the interwar period, when (except for a brief "popular front" interlude in the late 1930's, which ended with the 1939 Nazi-Soviet pact) Latin American Communists were directed to promote violent revolution in strict isolation from nationalist and reformist groups.

Because of prevailing domestic conditions, such a posture practically guaranteed political failure for the parties; even more important, it clearly identified the Soviets with the forces of internal subversion and resulted in the rupture of the USSR's newly-established diplomatic links with Mexico and Uruguay. In contrast, Soviet participation in the Allied cause and the abolition of the Comintern during World War II paved the way for diplomatic relations not only with the major Latin American governments (except Argentina) but with lesser ones as well, even the conservative dictatorships in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua. Concurrently, many Latin American Communist parties achieved legal status and made more converts by pursuing "popular front" tactics.

Clissold notes that most of the Soviet Union's wartime gains were wiped out after 1945, when Stalin returned to the "hard line" in the context of the Cold War. Nearly everywhere, local Communist parties were again plunged into isolation, and only Mexico, Uruguay, and Argentina (post-1946) retained their diplomatic ties with the USSR. Although Moscow gave strong moral support to the Communist-infiltrated Arbenz government in Guatemala during the early 1950's, that regime fell in the face of a US-aided exile invasion in 1954.

THE LATEST ERA in Soviet-Latin American relations opened in the late 1950's with Bulganin and Khrushchev's formulation of the policy of "peaceful coexistence." As the selections in the Carlton collection and essays in O & S by Alberto Faleroni, V. V. Volsky, and Oswald make clear, the appli-

cation of this policy to Latin America has been grounded in part on a less ideologically-constrained assessment of political and socio-economic realities in the area. Recognizing the prominent position of the "national bourgeoisie" in the structure of Latin American societies, the Russians have demonstrated a willingness to come to terms with "bourgeois nationalist" governments and, in this connection, have urged the *via pacifica* upon Latin American Communists. As Wolfgang W. Berner puts it (in O & S, summarizing an earlier study by Herbert Dinerstein), Soviet efforts "seem now to be concentrated more on intermediate objectives (e.g., on encouraging existing Latin American governments to counteract US economic influence, and to oppose US policies in general) than on ultimate goals." The Russians apparently hope that a gradual lessening of US influence will eventually lead (in Oswald's words) to "socialist industrialization, the collectivization of agriculture, and direct financial, technical, and trade relations with the USSR and Soviet socialist bloc nations."

To date, a more conciliatory Soviet approach to Latin America has resulted in the addition (besides Cuba) of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Venezuela to the list of countries with which the USSR maintains formal diplomatic links. Commenting that these links have become a status symbol for Latin American governments, Oswald advances the "impression that the recent Soviet diplomatic inroads . . . have been prompted by a deliberate and enthusiastic decision . . . to seek out and hug the Russian bear, rather than vice versa." On the other hand, he observes,

trade initiatives have usually come from the Soviet Union and involved credit grants for purchases of Soviet goods. Most of these credits have gone unused, generally because the items available in the USSR have not been of the type required or have been difficult to service. Nor have the Soviet Union or the East European countries developed significant markets for Latin American goods. For example, José Oswaldo de Meira Penna concludes (in O & S) that Brazil's favorable credit balance vis-a-vis Eastern Europe owes less to the magnitude of the latter's imports of Brazilian commodities than to the barter system, which confines Brazil's purchases to a relatively few useful East European exports. It should also be noted that the Soviet bloc has furnished Latin American governments—outside of Cuba—negligible aid unrelated to trade.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE Castro regime, through what Clissold describes as "a stroke of fortune, rather than design," confronted Soviet leaders early in the the "peaceful-coexistence" period with the two related problems of how much support to give the Cuban revolution and how to rationalize this support in ideological terms. Clissold stresses that Moscow's response was "cautious," but he details the rapid extension of political, economic, and military commitments to Cuba through 1962. Robert K. Furtak points out (in O & S) that the Soviets initially labeled Fidel Castro's government as a "national democratic state" or "revolutionary democracy"—to indicate that it had "liberated" itself from "American imperialism" to a greater degree than bourgeois nationalist regimes—

and that they later publicly accepted Castro's characterization of himself and his revolutionary party as "Marxist-Leninist," despite a series of purges of "old Communist" PSP functionaries. However, relations between the USSR and Cuba began to cool in 1962 over the purges, the outcome of the Cuban missile crisis, Cuba's poor economic performance, and Castro's subscription to Ernesto (Che) Guevara's "armed-struggle" line. In the last regard, Cuban and Chinese challenges forced the Soviets to concede that armed struggle might be admissible when all other roads to power are closed—although, as we have noted, Moscow has consistently and vigorously lobbied throughout Latin America for a much less ambitious strategy.

A key theme made explicit in the present works is that Moscow's experience with Castro buttressed the "peaceful-coexistence" policy that had begun to evolve *before* the Cuban revolution, precisely by demonstrating that a Latin American regime's outright conversion to Marxism-Leninism might not be in the best interests of the Soviet Union. Such a development could necessitate the massive diversion of scarce Soviet resources and possibly involve military risks, without, at the same time, guaranteeing either unwavering political-ideological support or the establishment of a "showcase" for the USSR. Berner remarks:

... Soviet leaders are likely to be haunted by the almost nightmarish thought that other victorious revolutionary Third World regimes may copy Castro's example and call for Soviet protection.

Likewise, Tad Szulc observes (in O & S):

It may be argued that the Cuban lesson has taught the Soviet Union not only the dangers of geographic over-extension . . . but the economic impossibility of financing every Latin American revolution that may succeed. If Cuba does cost Moscow a million dollars a day, what would be the cost if Brazil had gone the socialist or communist revolutionary way under Joao Goulart in 1964? . . . is it not justified to suppose that the Soviets may have secretly welcomed the fall of Goulart?

THE JOHNSON VOLUME offers a well-documented analysis of Chinese Communist involvement in Latin America. Johnson explains that the Chinese have long been interested in the area as part of the Third World, where they expect protracted conflict against "capitalist imperialism" to be waged. Since China and the Latin American countries are far from natural trading partners and the Chinese have had fewer material resources at their disposal than the Soviets, the Chinese campaign has been primarily one of propaganda. According to Johnson, Peking experienced a surge of optimism and vastly accelerated its efforts in Latin America at the outset of the Cuban revolution, and it profited initially from the possession of an ideology which approximated the armed-struggle line that Guevara propounded. However, as Johnson indicates, Mao's ideological inflexibility and his pretensions to leadership of world communism soon led to a clash with Castro and Régis Debray, the latter arguing vehemently (in *Revolution in the Revolution?*) against Chinese notions of "fixed bases" and the subordination of guerrillas to a "patriotic front" or party. Elsewhere in Latin America, pro-Chinese parties have dissipated their energies in squabbles with pro-Soviet groups and among themselves—thereby neglecting

opportunities to establish working relationships with guerrilla bands operating in the countryside. Johnson finds part of the explanation in the Maoist "theory of contradictions," which implies that "compromise with one's rivals is impossible." He states:

. . . the Chinese struggle so intensely against revisionists precisely because they consider the latter as obstacles to be removed so that they can then address themselves to the main task at hand, the elimination of "imperialism" from the world. Admittedly the Chinese may be devoting so much of their time and energy to combatting the "deviationists" in the "short run" that they may never have an opportunity for destroying the "imperialists" in the "long run"!

NEARLY HALF THE ESSAYS in the Oswald and Strover anthology—those by Wolfgang W. Berner, Robert K. Furtak, Boris Goldenberg, Peter Schenkel, Kevin Devlin, and Florence Mamegalos—devote considerable attention to establishing Castro's substantial ideological independence from both parties in the Sino-Soviet dispute. In the realm of foreign policy, Castro from 1962 to 1968 periodically reasserted his claim to leadership of revolutionary forces in Latin America with well-timed appeals for armed struggle. This pattern was punctuated by expedient shifts toward the Soviet position, most notably at a Havana conference of Latin American Communist parties in late 1964. On that occasion, the Cubans accepted a communique which recognized the right of each national Communist party to select its own strategy and tactics and condemned "all factionalist activity." Nevertheless, Castro returned to the revolutionary theme with unprecedented enthusiasm in the context of the Tricontinental Conference and the

First Latin American Peoples' Solidarity Conference, convened at Havana in January 1966 and July-August 1967, respectively.

Shortly before the Tricontinental gathering, the Cubans for the first time broke openly with the Chinese Communists over China's decision to reduce rice shipments. A month later, Castro accused Peking of attempted "blackmail" and overt propagandizing in Cuba. The second conference coincided with the publication of Debray's book and Guevara's Bolivian venture.

So much for the record to 1968, the last year covered by any of the works at hand. Developments since that time have put a new light on this record, for major alterations in the relationship between Soviet and Cuban policies and in general conditions in Latin America have occurred.

Clissold caught the entering wedge of still another shift in Cuban foreign policy by including as the last document in his collection Castro's speech of Aug. 22, 1968, which expressed support for the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. Thereafter, Castro appeared to draw closer both to the Soviet Union and to Latin America as he muted the armed-struggle line, commented favorably upon the expropriations and reforms instituted by the Peruvian and Bolivian militaries, and lauded Salvador Allende's victory at the polls in Chile. One can only speculate that Guevara's defeat in Bolivia may have been the final factor in convincing Castro of the inefficacy of additional exhortations to revolutionary violence and that the Cuban regime is currently preoccupied with domestic problems, typified by the disappointing sugar harvest of 1970.

Meanwhile, for all they differ

from one another, governments in Peru, Bolivia, and Chile have given anti-capitalist (particularly *foreign* capitalist), radical nationalism a new respectability in Latin America. Schenkel writes: "Castro communism . . . highlights the proliferation of Marxism in a growing variety of shades and brands." A similar statement might be made about the variants of "Marxism" or "socialism" advanced by Juan Velasco Alvarado, Juan José Torres, and Allende. However, "statism" is a better word than either "Marxism" or "socialism" (let alone "communism"!) to describe the new potential models that have arisen on the South American continent—if only to bury forever any suggestion that they are part of some amorphous international conspiracy. More important than the labels attached to these regimes, of course, is the fact that they have created perhaps irreversible warps in what Claudio Véliz has called the "politics of conformity" in Latin America.¹

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS for future Soviet, Chinese Communist, and Cuban influence? Chinese doctrine seems to have little relevance to the present balance of political forces in Latin America. Moreover, although

¹ Véliz's phrase refers to the general failure of middle-sector groups to implement the "structural" reforms that they had promised before winning power. As he comments, "it became evident that even when these groups attained political power, they did not implement these reforms but rather tried to become integrated into the existing social structure: what looked to some like massive social mobility turned out to be more like institutionalized social climbing." Véliz, Ed., *The Politics of Conformity in Latin America*, London, Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 3. According to Véliz, analysts have often overlooked the role of the "centralist state" in the Latin American tradition. This role,

Mao's thought will undoubtedly continue to hold some appeal for those Latins who remain committed to guerrilla action, Peking has not demonstrated a capacity to capitalize on this appeal. What will follow after Mao's death is anybody's guess. But *if* at least part of Latin America is entering upon a new period of radical nationalism and rapid socio-economic transformation—in most cases short of revolution from below—the Soviets and Cubans may well find the hemisphere environment an increasingly receptive one. Stripped of subversive overtones, their ideological stress on the desirability of structural change and an end to foreign domination will stand them in good stead. Szulc observes:

The impact of the Soviet Union as a national entity has become much more pronounced in recent years as the East-West "Cold War" has diminished in intensity. In other words, the decline of the Communist revolutionary pressure once emanating from Moscow as its foremost source . . . has opened doors to the Soviet Union that hitherto have been almost hermetically closed.

The same may yet prove to be true of Cuba, especially if Castro ultimately succeeds in putting his own house in order.

Enrique E. Rivarola (in O & S) summarizes the current outlook

paradoxically, both helps to explain why so few reforms have been accomplished (governmental paternalism has discouraged the independent generation and pursuit of demands by deprived social groups) and points to a potential instrument for the achievement of fundamental change (the state in the hands of nonconformist political leaders genuinely committed to reform). Véliz argues that "the time may now be ripe for the centralist state to come into its own [as a reformist instrument], fired with a new nationalism." "Centralism and Nationalism in Latin America," *Foreign Affairs* (New York), Vol. XLVII, No. 1, October 1968, p. 80.

with respect to the Soviet Union fairly well:

In the years immediately ahead, the division of the world into ideological blocs will pale in importance beside a far more real and dangerous gulf: that existing between the highly-industrialized countries and the underdeveloped countries with stagnating agrarian economies. . . . If efforts by leading Western countries to combat underdevelopment are not undertaken, or are inadequate, then the role that the West should, by reason of historical affinity, play in Latin America might be partially filled by the Soviet Union, which would thereby act to the benefit of its prestige and of its own economic interests.

In view of what we have said above about the constraints on trade with the Communist world

and Soviet aid, one might quarrel with Rivarola's reference to the USSR's "economic interests." But he is altogether correct in linking consideration of "historical affinity" and growing Soviet "prestige."

The central point is not that Latin American governments are likely to embrace much of Stalinist or Cuban economic doctrine (which is not probable) or that the Soviets and Cubans will enter into diplomatic relations with more Latin American countries and attract greater sympathy for some of their own positions on international matters (though they quite probably will). It is that Soviet diplomatic inroads appear to be symptomatic of gradual, deep-

seated changes in historic relationships, in particular that between the United States and Latin America. The "Western hemisphere idea" seems to be on the decline again, possibly into near-oblivion this time, as Latin Americans in their drive for development increasingly look elsewhere for—if little else—moral support.

There is a great deal of room for debate whether this trend will inevitably continue and whether it is in the long-range interest of Latin American governments, the United States, or the Soviet Union. However, the trend itself is obviously a matter of the utmost significance.

Power in the Provinces

By Philip D. Stewart

JERRY HOUGH: *The Soviet Prefects*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1969.

JERRY HOUGH'S BOOK on the complex interrelationships of the intermediate echelons of the Soviet party and state hierarchies is one of the most important works on Soviet politics published in the past decade. Although the methodology employed by the author poses some serious problems, *The Soviet Prefects* represents a major advance at both the theoretical and substantive levels.

Hough's contribution to the theory of Soviet politics is twofold. He reveals the inadequacies and oversimplifications contained

in the descriptions of Soviet political reality by the "rational-technical" model of Barrington Moore and by the monistic or Weberian model, and he offers a more satisfactory alternative to these models. As developed by Moore, the rational-technical model suggests that ongoing industrialization in the USSR will result in a political system characterized by wide participation of the technical intelligentsia in decision-making, with technical (and, presumably, rational) criteria supplanting political criteria in the resolution of major policy issues. The monistic model, based on Max Weber's "ideal type" of a unified, single, hierarchic command structure with clear lines of command and

responsibility, has fostered the assumption by some analysts that the existence of alternative or parallel administrative structures within a single society is necessarily irrational and dysfunctional. Hough argues persuasively that both models oversimplify matters and blind us to the essential functionality of the Soviet system of "dual supervision"—i.e., a system which features two parallel control hierarchies, the party and state apparatuses.

Far from constituting an unnecessary and irrational duplication of the lines of command of the state apparatus, in Hough's model the party apparatus—as exemplified by the regional (*oblast*) party leaders—is the essential ingredi-