

THE LATIN AMERICAN REVOLUTION

THE LATIN AMERICAN REVOLUTION: POLITICS AND STRATEGY FROM APRO-MARXISM TO GUEVARISM. By DONALD C. HODGES. (New York: William Morrow, 1974. Pp. 287. \$9.95.)

CHÉ'S GUERRILLA WAR. By RÉGIS DEBRAY. Translated by ROSEMARY SHEED (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1976. Pp. 157. \$2.50).

CAMILO TORRES: A BIOGRAPHY OF THE PRIEST-GUERRILLERO. By WALTER J. BROWDERICK. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975. Pp. 370. \$10.00.)

THE REVOLUTIONARY: A REVIEW AND SYNTHESIS. By WILLIAM T. DALY. (Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage Publications, No. 01-025. Pp. 40. \$2.10.)

Three of the works reviewed here contribute to our understanding of the revolutionary process in Latin America. Their collective focus is upon the decade of the 1960s and the strategy of rural guerrilla warfare spawned by the victory of the Cuban Revolution. Donald C. Hodges offers a detailed synthesis of *The Latin American Revolution: Politics and Strategy from Apro-Marxism to Guevarism*, in this necessary addition to the literature, updating and superseding Richard Gott's earlier treatment (*Guerrilla Movements in Latin America* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971]).

Hodges is unambiguous in his assessment of the revolutionary potential of Latin America: "No other area of the globe is better qualified historically to be the El Dorado of modern and contemporary revolutions. The stereotype of Latin America as a hotbed of revolution is not a caricature but a reality." Underlying his treatment is the understanding that "the different politics and strategies of the Latin American revolution are predicated for the most part on different characterizations of it." Thus, the book essays "The Rise and Fall of Apro-Marxism," "Communist Politics and Strategies," "Latin American Trotskyism," "The New Left: Fidel and OLAS," "Guevarism and the Insurreccional Foco," and, briefly, "The First Socialist Revolution in the Americas." Unfortunately, as the author notes, limitations of time and space precluded inclusion of a chapter on Maoism.

The Cuban Revolution ushered in guerrilla warfare as the dominant strategy of the 1960s. This development is traced in diplomatic and military detail in a pair of essays that total one-third of the book. The first, "The New Left: Fidel and OLAS," demonstrates that the diplomatic genius of Fidel Castro was not mysteriously dormant between the victory of the July 26 Movement and the daring success of Angola. For those interested in international politics, in the possibilities and limitations of First Class leaders in a Third World context, Hodges's commentary on Castro's diplomacy is fascinating. Readers will note the historic origins of the African maneuver in the OSPAAAL (Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, founded in January 1966), as well as the hemispheric significance of the OLAS (Organization of Latin American Solidarity) Declaration of 1967 and its relationship to the insurreccional focus that followed.

The second essay, "Guevarism and the Insurreccional Foco," treats the

tactical and strategic considerations of the Cuban formula, Ché's conception of a continental or Bolivarian strategy, and the post-Guevara proliferation of urban focus in the concrete jungles of the continent. It also provides an "Insurreccional Balance Sheet of a Decade," conceptualized as four revolutionary waves (Caribbean, Andean, Bolivarian, urban) against the bulwarks of the old order. While rural guerrillas have been either eliminated or rendered ineffectual by the nature of their isolation (although Colombia remains an exception owing to peculiarities stemming from La Violencia), Hodges finds "the balance sheet of the urban guerrillas is the most promising of all." This enthusiasm, understandable if one looks at the 1973 byline, must now be tempered given the destruction of the Brazilian urban guerrilla by the military dictatorship and the apparently similar result in Uruguay. It is in Argentina that this wave has yet to crest although the high water mark of the insurgency was perhaps 1973, when the combined Marxist-Peronist guerrillas forced Perón's return.

This book is itself the strategic setpiece in Hodges's tour de force of the Latin American revolution. Those seriously interested in pursuing the topic should also consult his two works with Abraham Guillen, the father of the urban guerrilla (*Philosophy of the Urban Guerrilla: The Revolutionary Writings of Abraham Guillen* [New York: William Morrow, 1973]; *Revaloración de la guerrilla urbana* [México, D.F.: Ediciones "El Caballito," 1977]) as well as the specific studies of Argentina and Mexico (*Argentina, 1943–1976: The National Revolution and Resistance* [Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976]; and [with Ross Gandy] *El destino de la revolución mexicana* [México, D.F.: Ediciones "El Caballito, 1977]).

The Debray and Broderick books treat the most widely known martyrs of these "Andean" and "Bolivarian" guerrilla waves. Because of his legendary stature and heroic example, Ché's failure in Bolivia still invites attention. Régis Debray, one of the ex-combatants, has a particular interest in explaining the Bolivian fiasco: "It is right to fight. It is right to discover the reasons for one's defeats." The result is Debray's best work, a forceful and often brilliantly written reconstruction of Bolivia in the hour of Ché. Debray's history of the ill-starred foco is a work of personal expiation, an exhumation in the tradition of Leninist self-criticism, respectful of the memory of Ché: "At best . . . a distasteful undertaking, at worst something of a profanation."

Régis Debray has never been an advocate of consistency, either within the internal presentation of his theories or from one scheme to another. *Revolution in the Revolution?*, Debray's first popular work, was a propagandistic argument for the Cuban revolutionary formula, the foco, and a polemical assault upon rival models (CP, Trotskyist, Maoist). He noted, perceptively, the variation and national peculiarities of Latin America and attacked the incongruity of importing foreign models to a diverse continent. He then argued the need to import the Cuban model. At various times in the last ten years, Debray has argued for rural guerrilla warfare and against the urban guerrilla; after the early successes of the Tupamaros he advocated urban guerrilla warfare; and after the Allende victory he argued for an electoral formula.

Ché's Guerrilla War will be most useful to those specialists who tend toward

appreciation of strategic abstractions and less so to those troubled by detail. Debray's long suit has never been history, his formal work was in philosophy and this work bears the familiar slips (e.g., Don Segundo Sembra [sic], p. 29; the Túpac Amaru and Túpac Katari revolts are incorrectly placed in the nineteenth century, p. 49; and the organization of peasant syndicates in Bolivia is mistakenly traced to 1964, p. 148). Some will, doubtless, find this unforgivable. The strongest chapters are those on the tragic foco and the strategy and tactics surrounding it. Certainly the history of Ché and the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional) are best appreciated in the abstract, the grand and daring plan for "Two, Three, Many Vietnams" radiating from the Bolivian geopolitical heartland. The overlying principle here is the idea of the primacy of "subjective conditions," the ability of a "puñado de hombres," to quote Fidel, to create the revolution; now.

Despite its flaws this is a work of style and intellect, well worth reading. Debray's analysis of Ché's continental strategy and the sad history of tactical error upon error is painfully recreated. The lesson is clear: strategic success rests, ultimately, upon tactical execution.

Camilo Torres, the "priest-guerrillero," is the subject of this sympathetic biography by Walter J. Broderick, himself a former priest. Because Father Torres was unfortunate enough to be killed early in his first combat, the space devoted to his guerrilla experience is limited to some forty pages. The author conveys the excitement and intrigue of Torres's last months and recreates the inexorable combination of personality and events that compelled this young aristocrat to forsake the pulpit for the foco. The book utilizes primary and secondary materials, published and unpublished, and interviews with Torres's relatives, friends, and enemies. A series of twenty-six photographs complements the narrative.

Broderick begins dramatically with Camilo's violent end and then retrospectively fills in the past behind the fatal conjuncture at Santander. One gains an appreciation of the secular and sacred oligarchy and the maneuverings of Church and state to retain control of their minions. The tediousness of the mainline Church is well conveyed as is the brutality of La Violencia. For those who read this book it should be clear why Colombia remains the most durable of the rural guerrilla theatres. It should also be clear that the one-dimensional stereotype of the revolutionary created by the media is simplistic and false.

No less simplistic is *The Revolutionary: A Review and Synthesis* by William T. Daly, a slender pamphlet, some forty pages of synopses from the various schools of what a good part of the globe would label "bourgeois social science." This is a minor work, one not likely to be seriously considered by either opponents or adherents of the paradigm. Aficionados of the graffiti of social science, the elaborately trite charts that clutter the profession, will find two bewildering specimens (pp. 16, 32) while readers of footnotes will find themselves frustrated by occasional omissions (e.g., Brzezinski [1966] is mentioned in the notes, but missing from the references) and errors (e.g., Lyford P. Edwards' early work [1927] is mistakenly cited in a later edition [1965] and placed after references to Crane Brinton and George Pettee [p. 36]), suggesting Edwards as a successor rather than a predecessor of these theorists. If this "synthesis" is any indication, political science remains more an ideology than a science.

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