

IN SEARCH OF THE "BRAZILIAN POLITICAL MODEL"

- BRAZIL: THE PEOPLE AND THE POWER.* by MIGUEL ARRAES. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1969. Pp. 232. \$2.45.)
- GLI INVESTIMENTI ITALIANI IN BRASILE.* by FRANCO BACCALINI. (Milan: Centro Studi Problemi Internazionali, CESPI, 1976. Pp. 52. Mimeo.)
- THE FIRST "REVOLUTIONARY" GOVERNMENT IN BRAZIL: A VALUE ANALYSIS.* By ROBERT S. BYARS. (Buffalo, N.Y.: SUNY at Buffalo, Council on International Studies Special Studies No. 19, 1972. Pp. 21. Mimeo.)
- POLITICAL STRIKES IN BRAZIL, 1960-1964: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF ORGANIZED LABOR.* By KENNETH P. ERICKSON. (New York: New York University, Ibero-American Language and Area Center Occasional Paper No. 17, 1975. Pp. 33. Mimeo.)
- CONTEMPORARY BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY: THE INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY OF AN EMERGING POWER.* By WILLIAM PERRY. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, Foreign Policy Papers 2, no. 6, 1976. Pp. 89. \$3.00.)
- BRAZIL: FOREIGN POLICY OF A FUTURE WORLD POWER.* By RONALD M. SCHNEIDER. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1976. Pp. 236. \$16.50.)
- OIL AND POLITICS IN MODERN BRAZIL.* By PETER SEABORN SMITH. (Toronto: MacMillan and Maclean-Hunter Press, 1976. Pp. 289. \$19.95.)
- EL DESARROLLO ESQUIVO.* By MARSHALL WOLFE. (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1976. Pp. 312.)

All of these studies, with one exception, deal with Brazil—past, present, and future. A second similarity is that the authors use their analyses to arrive at some sort of policy prescription. In some cases (such as Arraes and Wolfe), the prescriptions are open and clear; in others, the authors do not make specific recommendations, but the underlying policy orientation is evident. In this sense, they all try to convey a message to some "prince," albeit in a variety of ways: some whisper, others shout, some allow bits of information to drop in casual conversation for the prince to pick up at his own discretion.¹ Regardless of the fact that these works are oriented to princes, or perhaps because of this, they contain provocative ideas and hypotheses, although at different levels of sophistication.

Setting aside the quality of the works for a moment, some appear more "bruised" than others because of the specific fashion in which they were published. Baccalini's stands out in this regard; publication in mimeographed form of only a portion of his longer thesis cripples it somewhat. In addition, the theme operates against the work for the reader interested in Latin American subjects: Baccalini studies Italian investments in Brazil, which amount to less than 5 percent of total foreign investment there.

Erickson's work, although suffering from the same disease of format, has

greater appeal for the student of Brazilian politics. Focusing on the relationship between the armed forces and labor, Erickson points out more important things about the former than about the labor movement itself. This is due, at least in part, to the fact that the demobilization policies implemented (with varying degrees of ruthlessness) by the post-1964 administrations in Brazil reduced the political visibility (but not the political relevance, of course) of all labor questions. Erickson argues that although never independent, given the corporatist nature of its organizational process, labor was far more free prior to 1964 than after; and the fact that the armed forces developed a more autonomous and self-confident attitude due to their new ruling position is given as an explanation of why they lost their "responsiveness" to the labor movement and changed their attitude from co-optative to repressive. It is unfortunate that Erickson was lured (as were his sources) into a discussion of the so-called "moderative role" of the Brazilian military. This notion was recently dismissed (quite rightly, it must be said) by a Brazilian political scientist, who contends that the idea of moderative power was a notion developed by some civilian groups to convince the military to intervene in politics on their behalf.²

Byars' interesting work on the values of the first "revolutionary" government after 1964 is almost exhaustive. However, notwithstanding the amount of work involved in its preparation, we do have a reservation. Byars ignores the dissonance (although less intense during the Castello Branco period than today) between the public rhetoric of the military as politicians and their actual policy practice. Ignoring this is possibly the result of being non-Brazilian—one who tends to consider the content of decision-makers' speeches as an indication of the values that orient the decisional process and of the intentions, goals, etc., of the major actors involved. In the Brazilian context, however—given the higher degree of political realism (or cynicism, if one prefers)—it is widely known that, for the purposes of political analysis, the public rhetoric of ruling groups is only marginally elucidative. In the case of the post-1964 regimes, there is a clear notion that their legitimacy in the eyes of civil society is limited. Thus, in the strategies employed by the revolutionary governments to build a new basis of legitimacy, the public rhetoric of their spokesmen has been instrumental in disseminating the values and goals that they claim as representing the best interests of society.

Smith's work is more encompassing, although it concentrates on an *apparently* narrow theme: the politics of oil. As an historian, he takes a step forward in clarifying an area that has been largely ignored and in which the military have played an important part: the administration of the petroleum business. He thoroughly studies the role of the military in the creation of the Conselho Nacional do Petróleo and in the Campanha da Petrobrás. It was from experience developed here that they gained the necessary self-confidence to enter other areas, in a process that has been called recently the *estatização da economia*. Understanding the role of the military in Petrobrás (as well as in the development of the steel industry) is critical to an appreciation of how they took over many economic concerns and dismissed the nonmilitary work being done in them as insufficient and/or inadequate for the needs of economic growth (as understood by the military).

If it is easy to see why the military adopted a more repressive attitude towards labor after 1964, it is more difficult to understand and accept their increased role in the economic sphere. It is intriguing that the same free-marketeters who were jailing their more nationalistic peers in the early fifties were the ones who took over in 1964; who, although using a rhetoric that certainly sustains the old image (as analyses of the Byars' type would conclude), were leaders in the process of increasing drastically the degree of state control over the economy, a move that has frustrated many of the most conservative supporters of the take-over, especially among businessmen. Smith is critical of the military in running the oil business. Although such criticism may be objectively accurate, the military have perceived their performance in Petrobrás as a successful one. This has made it possible for them to redefine their proper economic role and to brush aside those civil sectors that are feeling squeezed by the economic policies adopted by the last administrations.

The Perry and Schneider books are by far the most exciting in the set. If they rely less on systematic data than some of those previously mentioned, they nonetheless provide the most stimulating hypotheses. The nationalistic developments in Brazilian foreign policy, which became apparent in the late 1960s and more perceptible in the early 1970s, could hardly have been anticipated if one looked at some of Castello Branco's initiatives in that field. It is also interesting that the *bête noire* of the 1964 power holders (namely the *politica externa independente* of the early 1960s) re-emerged just a few years later in the form of such specific actions as the Brazilian refusal to sign the Treaty of Tlatelcoco and the mobilization behind the 200-mile limit of the territorial sea. This finally emerged as the *pragmatismo responsável* of the Geisel administration, which is nothing but the *politica externa independente* in new clothes. What is curious is that it has taken so long for works such as Perry's and Schneider's to appear; i.e., that the perception of the Brazilian military as a group that looked backwards in political terms and especially in the field of foreign policy has taken so long to die out.

While Perry's work focuses broadly on the changes in recent Brazilian foreign policy, Schneider's goes more deeply into the effective problems to be solved in overcoming such bottlenecks as pressure from new institutional actors to participate in the process of foreign policymaking. Up to a point, this challenges the traditional monopoly held by Itamaraty in the formation of foreign policy and provides a partial explanation for the revival of the *politica externa independente*. Although the works of both authors are open to much discussion, they allow for explanations (still sketchy and tentative) of the recent crisis in U.S.-Brazil relations embodied in the controversy over the nuclear cooperation treaty with West Germany and in the breaking of all military assistance treaties with the United States. They also provide clues to possible future crises, such as the emergence of an independent power zone in South America. This is a move very likely to be attempted by Brazil, even if it takes some effort to convince Argentina (and several other countries) that "there is an elephant sitting on top of her."

Arraes' book, although not the most exciting, is certainly the most candid,

and is the only work covered in this review that is neither academic nor claims to be. Arraes' political career was cut short by the post-1964 power holders, exactly when he was coming to the foreground of national politics. Thus, it is possible to see a mixture of political militancy and personal and political bitterness in the work. Arraes' overall analysis of Brazilian history undoubtedly throws some light on certain themes, the most important being the unrepresentativeness of the political system even prior to 1964. This point is particularly relevant because it deviates from the traditional view in Brazilian historiography.

Arraes gives excessive emphasis to the 1964 coup in confirming and reinforcing Brazilian subordination to the United States. A related matter, which may very well have been misinterpreted by Arraes, is the importance of the U.S. training of some Brazilian military. According to him, such training was responsible for the increase in Brazilian subordination to the United States. However, the training of Brazilian officers in the U.S., even if that was instrumental in the takeover itself, need not necessarily have resulted in the development of an acritical, pro-American attitude, at least not to the extent that Arraes suggests nor that which common sense would grant. Although the theme itself has not been studied, a reading of Perry's and Schneider's work would hint that the relationship between training and future attitudes is not as linear as assumed. Finally, the significance Arraes assigns to the oligarchy in defining the outcome of the current Brazilian political process seems to be excessive. As we see it, the importance attributed to this group ignores the relative autonomy and sense of self-sufficiency that the military have developed since 1964, especially in the 1970s.

Wolfe's work is not on Brazil; it also differs from the others in that it is the most clearly policy oriented. However, as such there are two flaws: it is too long, and analyzes theories in a far too sophisticated manner for average policymakers. After discussing options for development, Wolfe presents his prescriptions for specific areas such as education and social security. But the strength of the prescriptive section cannot compare with the theoretical analysis, which diminishes both the power of his analysis and the impact of his proposals.

Although all the works acknowledge (to a greater or lesser extent) the impact of the existing political arrangement—namely, the preeminent political role of the Brazilian military—as an independent variable in the analysis of the policies and issue areas they examine, none of them gives a general picture of the "Brazilian political model" *per se*. As a matter of fact, from the information and insights provided by these works, it would be easy to conclude that there is no "Brazilian model" that could have been created and implemented by the military since 1964.

Each author has approached his area of investigation according to a specific theoretical framework, explaining why this collection of works does not give the reader a homogeneous, coherent image of recent Brazilian political developments. We are willing to argue, however, that even if one author (or set of authors sharing similar orientations) decided to investigate all these areas—history, economic policy, foreign relations, military ideology, and so on—the final product might be neither more clear nor more integrated. First, given the

very stage of Brazil's development, the level of institutionalization in some policy areas is quite incongruent with that in others. As an example, when one compares foreign policy and labor relations, the findings somehow do not fit. Moreover, most of the issues dealt with in these works refer to processes that are ongoing and that have not yet acquired any definite procedural format. Therefore, analysis of petroleum policies can rely upon a number of cumulative decisions along the lines of nationalism and autonomy (although these terms have been strategically redefined over time and operationalized in different ways). But this is not true of labor policies, where orientations have changed many times and quite drastically in the last twenty years (without, however, touching the corporatist cornerstone), due to the extreme sensitivity of labor questions to any major political and economic change.

In other words, although it is possible to grasp the basic format and content of the decision-making process in Brazilian foreign policy, other areas are still in search of a definition of the "legitimate" actors in the policy formation process (e.g., should the trade unions be allowed on the scene or not?); hence the indefinite quality of any work that intends to analyze such issues. "Uneven" best describes the Brazilian political system today, but this is not the last word in the controversy. Quite the contrary; if taken literally, it may be a misleading concept, implying a middle position, as if the system would be properly balanced once its more backward dimensions became developed. The relevance of studying the Brazilian case lies precisely in the fact that, once we start to see it as the configuration of what may be a new "type" of political system, solid foundations are being laid for a well-based criticism of the traditional theories of political development.

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NOTES

1. We borrowed the "prince" theme from "Democracia, simplesmente," an interview granted by Fernando Henrique Cardoso to the weekly magazine *Isto é* (issue number 32, 3 August 1977), pp. 33–37.
2. Edmundo Campos Coelho. *Em Busca da Identidade: O Exército e a Política na Sociedade Brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 1976). The theme is dealt with in detail in chap. 5, "1945–1964: A Alienação do Exército."