
REPORTS

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES IN FRANCE

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THIS SURVEY OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES IN FRANCE WAS COMPILED IN THE fall of 1967 and early 1968 with the aid of correspondents at the major universities in France, and from scholarly journals and bibliographies.¹ The survey includes a brief discussion of the French news media's coverage of Latin America, a listing of the more important academic periodicals in the field, and a description of the universities and institutes supervising the area studies. Also, an attempt has been made to enumerate the larger research projects now in progress and to comment on general trends in all of the current research in Latin American studies in France.

II

It is the policy of the French government to cultivate the friendship of almost all of the regimes in Central and South America; the government also encourages and gives financial aid to numerous teaching and research projects in which French scholars are involved with Latin America. The Fifth Republic subsidizes various publications and maintains its own center of documentation which puts out a bulletin on current developments in the Americas. It should be added that the state-financed universities and institutes have strict control over how and where funds will be used; there is an old tradition of academic freedom within these establishments, and even in the center of documentation. The nation's leading scholars, all of whom draw their salaries indirectly from the government, would not tolerate political interference with intellectual matters.

III

Although the French television network occasionally produces useful news programs on Latin America, the academic community depends on *Le Monde* for day-to-day coverage and analysis of developments in this area. This newspaper, with a formidable editorial staff in Paris, has one full-time correspondent

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in Latin America, and a large number of "stringers" there. Often the paper has extended series of articles which give background information and recent political histories of the larger American states.² In periods of crisis, *Le Monde* offers lead space on its front page to academicians who are specialists in the areas where the news is being made.

There is a less-well-known, but most useful, daily publication, *L'Information latine* (25, rue Jean Dollent, Paris 14^e), which also gives a large coverage to Latin American news.

France has several weekly news magazines in the American style, but their coverage of Latin America is uneven and too often inaccurate. A quarterly review, *Notes et études documentaires. Problèmes d'Amérique latine*, put out by the government's Service de Documentation has a much wider circulation within the academic community. The Latin Americanists who spoke with this author often complimented this periodical's coverage of current political and economic trends, and they considered it to be free of any single political bias.

IV

France has only one scholarly review, in the area of studies under consideration, which has achieved a wide international circulation. The *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* is particularly strong in pre-Columbian archeology and history, but it has also published important contributions to the history of modern Latin America as well as literary criticism and articles in the social sciences. The journal regularly summarizes research underway by members of the Society, and it reports on the numerous meetings and conferences at which Society fellows participate.

French universities directing research in Latin American studies put out their own periodicals in this field. The most impressive of these, the *Cahiers du monde hispanique et luso-brésilien* (formerly known as *Caravelle*), comes from Toulouse. In recent years this review has had a preponderance of articles in intellectual history, but one entire issue (number three) of the *Cahiers* contained a reportage of a national conference of scholars investigating the economic and social problems of Latin American capitals. The *Cahiers* also publishes articles dealing with Spanish and Portuguese linguistics as well as occasional treatises on the economic development of several American states. A second important university publication comes from Strasbourg. The *Travaux de l'Institut d'Études Latino-américaines de l'Université de Strasbourg* (TILAS), a regular part of the *Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres*, is respected for its contributions to the history of American literature and for its publication of Jacques Lafaye's work in early colonial Mexican history.

French scholars feel that the *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*, along

with the periodicals put out at irregular intervals by the provincial universities, do not provide adequate space to publish the results of the research of a growing number of Latin Americanists in the country; there was a warm welcome, therefore, for the first issue of a new journal in the field. The *Cahiers des Amériques latines*, sponsored by the Institut des Hautes Études de l'Amérique Latine of the University of Paris, is weighted towards history and the social sciences, but includes discussions of Latin American literature as well. At present, Latin American experts write for *Annales—économies, sociétés, civilisations*, *Sociologie du travail*, *Tiers monde*, *Les Temps modernes*, and *Esprit*, reviews which are not specifically designed for the study of this area.

V

In Latin American studies, as in most other fields of academic endeavor, Paris remains the center of activity for all of France. The University of Paris consists of a large number of schools, institutes, and associations, certain of which deal with American affairs. The Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, usually known as the Sorbonne, is the most famous branch of the University that offers lectures and seminars on Latin America. The Sorbonne, though, maintains a traditional and perhaps narrow concept of these studies, leaving a wide range of activities to other parts of the University. Whereas the Sorbonne oversees research on the history of America and on the geography of this region, the responsibility for most of the advanced studies in economics and the other social sciences remains with the "Sixth Section" of the École Pratique des Hautes Études. The Sorbonne is concerned with the theory and style of research and writing, and the other academic disciplines such as geography; the École Pratique was established to direct the practical aspects of scholarly work and to teach the newest methods in the social sciences. There are a number of important research projects on the Americas currently in progress at the École Pratique. The Sociologist Alain Touraine is directing a study of the attitudes of the working class in Argentina, Chile, and Colombia. He has already published *Huachipato et Lota: Etude sur la conscience ouvrière dans deux entreprises chiliennes* in collaboration with Torcuato Di Tella, Lucien Brams, and Jean-Daniel Raynaud. Also from the École Pratique, Ruggiero Romano is co-operating with a number of academicians in Latin America on a large work, *Problèmes et méthodes d'histoire économique latino-américaine*, which will appear as a book shortly. Neither are Sorbonne Professors denied the right to engage in research in the more advanced areas of the social sciences. Roger Bastide, for instance, is currently directing a research project on the psychological and social difficulties of acclimatization experienced by immigrants from Haiti and Guadeloupe in France.

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The Law School of the University of Paris has gained the services of Celso Furtado, a Visiting Professor of Economic Development, with special reference to Brazil and Latin America.

A new branch of the University, the Institut des Hautes Études de l'Amérique Latine, has taken charge of an increasing number of the larger research projects in the field. Directed by Pierre Monbeig, the Institut has its own publications and a distinguished roster of visiting professors as well as an ample library at 28, rue Saint Guillaume, Paris 7^e. (A complete listing of the Institut's publications can be obtained from this address.) Working in this library is pleasant because of its extensive cataloguing of recent articles in all Western languages on American states in terms of internal politics, foreign relations, intellectual life, social questions, economic questions, and finances. The Centre de Documentation of the Institut is now at work on an even larger international bibliography, following the same format, which eventually will be published in pamphlet form.

The Institut des Hautes Études de l'Amérique Latine is less than two decades old; other divisions of the University still direct a considerable amount of the research on Central and South America even though their scholars occasionally teach at the Institut. The Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, for instance, distributes a major portion of the money available for the advanced research in the field. The C.N.R.S. also has its own series of books on Latin America, and it subsidizes the *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*. Currently the C.N.R.S. is sponsoring an investigation of the role of cities in the regional development of the American states which is being directed by Olivier Dollfus, Frédéric Mauro, and Claude Bataillon.

The Fondation National des Sciences Politiques, through its Centre d'Études des Relations Internationales, also plays a role in the studies under consideration. At present, François Chevalier is in charge of a group at the Centre which is studying agrarian problems and their effect on politics in a number of the American nations.

Anthropologists from all over the world are drawn to the University of Paris' College de France where Claude Lévi Strauss has pioneered in new techniques of "structuralism" in the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale. Lévi Strauss is, at the same time, a director of the Société des Américanistes, another organization such as the C.N.R.S., which has indistinct affiliations with the University. The Société des Américanistes, headed by Marcel Bataillon, has its offices and library at the Musée de l'Homme (Place Trocadéro, Paris 16^e), and serves to co-ordinate and encourage research particularly in anthropology, archaeology, art history, and literary history. The *Bibliographie américaniste*, published every two years by this association, is a comprehensive listing of new books and articles on Latin America by European and American authors. At

this time, the Société is working on a larger computerized bibliography covering the fields of archeology, history, linguistics, social anthropology, ethnohistory, demography, and physical anthropology.

The University of Paris, so important in any discussion of Latin American studies in France, has expanded outside of the city itself. The University's Faculté des Lettres at Nanterre is beginning to set up a program in these studies with the advice of the widely-published specialist in economic history, Frédéric Mauro. The sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso is another of the more distinguished lecturers already at Nanterre. Professor Mauro came to this new branch of the University from Toulouse where the Institut d'Études Hispaniques, Hispano-américaines et Luso-brésiliennes is particularly strong in the field of Portuguese language and civilization. Professor Jean Roche, who did his early work on German immigrants in Brazil, has expanded the Institut's program to the extent that there are 400 undergraduate students in Portuguese language classes, and a steady flow of Portuguese and Brazilian visiting professors who lecture to the more advanced students in Portuguese.

The Universities at Aix and Poitiers, like Toulouse, have strong programs in Spanish and Portuguese literature and linguistics. Aix also has a new program of study in the Indian languages of Latin America. The University of Rennes draws a good number of students in Latin American literature because of the work of Jean-Michel Massa.

Lyon has become known for its courses on the current politics of Latin America due to the writing of Jacques Lambert. The university of Strasbourg is perhaps a larger center of Latin American Studies outside of Paris. At Strasbourg's Institut d'Études Latino-américaines, professor Jacques Lafaye is coordinating graduate research in three major areas: Europe's knowledge of the Americas in the seventeenth century, eighteenth and nineteenth century literature of European voyageurs in the Western Hemisphere, and the history of the Jews in Latin America. Strasbourg too is noted for its work in the geography of Latin America; this research is under the guidance of Professor Jean Tricart.

The University of Bordeaux has a program in tropical geography led by M. F. Papy which is working to evaluate the resources and industrial potentials of several areas of Latin America. It is from Bordeaux too that François Chevalier directs much of the research on agrarian economics sponsored by the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques. Chevalier's students at Bordeaux are concentrating on Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. Chevalier also directs the French Institute of the University of Madrid.

Other French academicians are active in the educational life of Latin America itself. To mention a few examples, Olivier Dollfus, a professor of geology at the Sorbonne, directs the Institut Français d'Études Andines in Lima; Ruggiero Romano teaches at the University of Santiago; and Jean Roche taught

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for nine years at the University of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil. Also, an impressive number of Latin Americans come to France for their own higher education. As evidence of this tradition, in 1964, 35 out of the 54 candidates for the *diplôme* at the Institut des Hautes Études de L'Amérique Latine were from Latin America.

VI

Even a survey as brief and as general as this one reveals important features of contemporary Latin American studies in France. First of all, there is a long-standing emphasis on the physical and statistical basis of the history of the region evident from the importance given to geographical studies of the Americas and from the interest in the economics of the area. The interdisciplinary research project, on the other hand, is a comparatively new feature of the French academic world. The most ambitious of these in progress today involves geographers, economists, sociologists, anthropologists, and historians working on the problems of the largest Latin American cities.³

In a more general paper on Latin American studies in all of Europe, Professor Charles Wagley of Columbia University has pointed out another unusual aspect of current French scholarship in this field:

Claude Lévi Strauss offers a course on the mythology of the South and North American Indians and writes on social structure using South American ethnological data to test his theories. Roger Bastide writes on African religions in Brazil, but in his seminar, research on Africans living in Paris . . . [is of central importance]. In short, area studies seem more integrated with general social science; the fact that a social scientist uses Latin American . . . materials does not set him off in some special "area category." If anything, the use of such exotic data seems to make his theories more interesting.⁴

French scholarship, and especially that relating to Latin America, is changing in another respect. Some Americans who have done research in France in the past have been disturbed by the lack of research facilities in the country. Today, two of the major centers of Latin American studies are engaged in extensive bibliographical work. And as the Société des Américanistes begins to assemble a computerized listing of books and articles, it continues to publish a useful bi-annual bibliography in this area of study.

Finally, French scholars have been quick to point out the major weaknesses in Latin American studies there today. Professor Frédéric Mauro has commented that his colleagues have not thoroughly investigated the documents and sources available in France and Europe for the colonial period; Mauro maintains too that the academicians have not made sufficient use of the monographs already published in France in compiling general histories of Latin America.

These comments, however, were part of an article suggesting ways to develop these studies in France.⁵ The academic community is conscious of the present condition of Latin American studies—and most anxious to improve it.

NOTES

1. Madame Guyot, Secretary of the *Société des Américanistes*, was particularly gracious in providing guidance and information for the survey. Any omissions or errors in the article, though, are the responsibility of its author.
2. See, for instance, Marcel Niedergang's complete, though now dated, survey of the political situation in Brazil in *Le Monde*, July 22–July 27, 1967.
3. For a prospectus explaining the goals of this project and the research already underway, write to the *Institut des Hautes Études d'Amérique Latine* at the address given earlier in this article.
4. Dr. Charles Wagley, "Latin American Studies in Europe," p. 4 of an unpublished report for *Education and World Affairs* (522 Fifth Avenue, New York City 10036).
5. Mauro, "Comment développer les recherches françaises sur l'histoire de l'Amérique latine?" *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, Oct.-Dec. 1967, pp. 424–435.