

CLASS, RACE, PROGRESS, AND NATIONALISM IN BRAZIL

BRAZIL. AWAKENING GIANT. By PHILIP RAINE. (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1974. Pp. 268. \$7.00.)

BLACK INTO WHITE. RACE AND NATIONALITY IN BRAZILIAN THOUGHT. By THOMAS E. SKIDMORE. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974. Pp. 299. \$10.00.)

BRAZILIAN SOCIETY. By T. LYNN SMITH. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975. Pp. 273. \$12.00.)

During recent years an abundance of research and writing has become available to the English-language reader interested in Brazil. Translations of writings by Caio Prado Júnior, José Honório Rodrigues, and Celso Furtado help in an understanding of the colonial background. These are supplemented in case studies by economic historians Peter Eisenberg and Stanley Stein and in regional studies by historians Warren Dean on São Paulo, Joseph Love and Carlos Cortés on Rio Grande do Sul, and Ralph Della Cava on the Northeast. Robert Levine, Stanley Hilton, and John Wirth contribute to knowledge of the Vargas period, while Thomas Skidmore and Riorden Roett deal with politics in the post-Second World War period. Important studies of institutional life have appeared, including books by Philippe Schmitter, Alfred Stepan, Ronald Schneider, Shepard Forman, Lawrence Graham, and others. Economic studies by Werner Baer, Albert Fishlow, Albert Hirschman, and Nathaniel Leff have helped. Ronald Chilcote and John W. F. Dulles have portrayed the significant legacy of protest and leftist politics. A plethora of writings by other authors, too many to list here, supplement and enrich knowledge and understanding of contemporary Brazil.

The study of Brazil should analyze social class, class differences, and class conflict. Personal accounts by Miguel Arraes and Márcio Moreira Alves provide insights into this subject. Analysis of internal class structure in relation to Brazilian dependence upon the outside world, imperialism in particular, also is much needed. The books by Raine, Smith, and Skidmore, reviewed here, only peripherally relate to these two themes. This review reflects upon the tangential relationship of their work to the theme of class and also concentrates on the themes of race, progress, and nationalism.

Clearly the most significant of these three books is Skidmore's intellectual history of Brazil, with emphasis on the Old Republic. It focuses on the elite intelligentsia's conceptions and misconceptions of race relations. Sifting out racial attitudes from the writings and thought of major literary figures, Skidmore deals with the issue of race through historical periods: during the quarter century prior to the abolition of slavery in 1888; thereafter during the Old Republic, when Brazilian reaction to European notions of white superiority and

civilization of black peoples were fused to a scientific approach to the study of society; and during the twenties and thirties, when the doctrine of "whitening" through mixing or miscegenation of the races became a positive virtue. Skidmore's analysis of these periods also provides a foundation for understanding positivist ideals that today permeate nationalist thought in Brazil.

Drawing heavily upon the writings of Roque Spencer Maciel de Barros and João Cruz Costa, Skidmore traces the influence of positivism in Brazil: On the one hand, there was orthodox religious positivism, which organized into a formal church in 1881; and, on the other, the populist positivism based on Comte and in sympathy with his general interpretation of science, without adopting his schemes of historical inevitability. Positivism served to challenge elitist notions of privilege in politics (through advocacy of a republic), in economics (through abolition of slavery), in religion (through liberalizing of the Church), and in education (through instilling the idea of science in instruction).

Positivism also promoted certain ideals which buttressed twentieth-century society. While the abolitionists, Joaquin Nabuco among them, led the antislavery crusade of the late nineteenth century, they also promoted the notion of a "whitening" process in Brazil. They felt, for example, that the mixing of races was a positive consequence as long as Caucasian blood could be absorbed through the influx of European immigration. Without the accompanying rapid urbanization and economic growth that had spread through Europe, racial inferiority became associated with the lack of progress and determinist interpretations of the debilitating Brazilian habitat. Reacting to pessimism about the future of Brazil, thinkers such as Silvio Romero began to urge that Brazilians master scientific doctrines and apply them to their country. Further, he believed that the nation's character and culture would spring from the interaction between the people and their natural habitat. His vision of an original national character, based on the constitution of a mixed and distinct race, became one of the early roots of contemporary nationalism.

Skidmore examines racial thought after the end of slavery and focuses on three schools: first, the ethnological-biological school, with mid-nineteenth century origins in the United States, which believed that the human races were created as different species, thereby giving scientific basis to assumptions about white superiority; second, the historical school, which relied primarily upon historical evidence in supporting assumptions about the superiority of the white race; and third, Social Darwinism, which argued for an evolutionary process in which the "stronger" and more "civilized" white race would predominate while the black race would be doomed to extinction. Skidmore critically examines the work of Nina Rodrigues, "the first researcher to study African influence systematically." Then he elaborates on the Brazilian theory of "whitening" that emanated from the thought accepted by the Brazilian elite in the years from 1889 to 1914. His analysis is enriched not only with references to the European origins of racist thought in Brazil but with a comparison of Brazilian and U.S. attitudes and beliefs about race.

This analysis of racism in Brazil serves as a backdrop to an invaluable

synthesis of Brazilian nationalism as it was formulated at the turn of the century and evolved thereafter. Skidmore meticulously sketches political developments, identifying some of the early anti-Portuguese sentiments as well as nationalist manifestations; some he links to the literature of the period as represented in the works of Machado de Assis, Euclides da Cunha, and Graça Aranha. As Brazilian thinkers struggled with the positivist objectives of order and progress, symbolized on the national flag, they fell into three camps. One argued that Brazil was progressing significantly. Another acknowledged a problem, tied to the relationship of their national identity and race, which was felt would be resolved through time. The third camp rejected scientific racist assumptions altogether and argued that through identification of a Brazilian uniqueness a strong nation could be built. Two of the writers who pursued this latter orientation were Manoel Bomfim and Alberto Torres. While Bomfim elaborated an antiracist, nationalist, and antiimperialist position, Torres outlined a new governmental and constitutional structure that called for increased federal power; some of these ideas were evident in trends after 1930.

Skidmore links the ideas of the period to political events. An early concern of government was the promotion abroad of the Brazilian image, a ploy to entice immigrants to Brazil. A later concern, during the second decade of the present century, was the realization that Brazil should be controlled by Brazilians. The Brazilian elite took upon itself to establish organizations of national defense. Rethinking Brazilian nationality became a theme of Brazilian literature. Then too, intellectual nationalism was accompanied by economic nationalism. Finally, the new interpretations of nationalism incorporated the question of race, now, more than ever, clearly related to national character. Writers such as Gilberto Freyre began to provide a rationale for Brazil's multiracial society. While the African no longer was seen as a barbarian of inferior stock, stress was placed on the white elite which had gained cultural traits from intimate contact with African and Indian peoples. Such interpretations in turn strengthened the "whitening" thesis, popularly promoted by some writers and systematically examined by Oliveira Vianna, a lawyer and historian whose works were widely read at the time and still are today.

Explicitly acknowledging his debt to the positivist tradition that has permeated Brazilian and North American social science, rural sociologist T. Lynn Smith offers us an overview of impressions of contemporary Brazilian society. His volume of disparate essays, some being lectures and others reprints of earlier materials, is especially concerned with the "building of a genuine science of society; disseminating the systematized body of theoretical knowledge of which it is made up; and helping to bring sociological facts and principles to bear upon men's thoughts and actions" (p. 8). One of his early essays examines the influence of Auguste Comte upon sociology in Brazil and the United States. It is a rather fascinating topic that alludes to the search by intellectuals for a science in their study of society. Comparison of intellectual activity in Brazil and the United States also is a useful contribution in his essay, which unfortunately remains unfinished and degenerates into self-serving

statements and a list of names of prominent Brazilian and North American friends of the author.

This obsession with objective science is pursued through several chapters of dryly represented data on the Brazilian population in which racial, ethnic, age, marital, and other characteristics are described. Reminiscent of the intellectual traditions analyzed exhaustively by Skidmore, Smith too emphasizes the theme of race and ethnic origin. One chapter, reprinted from Smith's classic, *Brazil, People and Institutions*, reviews the enslavement of Indian and African, the activity of Portuguese and other early white colonists, as well as twentieth-century immigration. He is genuinely intrigued by the mixing of races in Brazil, and he reaffirms the unwritten creed of racial equality espoused by most Brazilian intellectuals. He analyzes the "bleaching" of the Brazilian population, demonstrating reasons why Brazilians are becoming whiter in color. Immigrants contribute significantly to this process, but so, too, does the structure of social classes: Lower classes are blacker and redder, upper classes are whiter and produce as many children as the middle and lower classes. Furthermore, children of upper classes survive in larger proportions than children in lower classes. Inevitably, succeeding generations will continue to lighten. Thus, Smith combines empirical fact with historical reality to justify the "whitening" theory that pervades the intellectual thought synthesized by Skidmore. In a brief epilogue, however, he conjectures that the whitening process may cease by the end of the century. He attributes this to falling birth rates among whites and decreasing death rates among blacks. He notes that this pattern also has been evident in the United States since the thirties.

The whitening thesis and traditions of science are clearly linked to the positivist notions of order and progress. Smith turns to an examination of rural and urban life in Brazil, then offers a comparison to the United States. He notes that division of labor and specialization tend to be greater in urban than in rural areas, and that a greater portion of Brazil's population in comparison to that of the United States resides in the countryside. There is also a greater degree of specialization among U.S. political, business, intellectual, and other leaders. Specialization is clearly an indication of modernization, and someday Brazil may be expected to reach the U.S. level of progress.

Class differences are also noteworthy. Acknowledging the dominance of the small upper class in Brazil, Smith nevertheless is hopeful that all Brazil will aspire to the middle-class traditions of the United States ("a middle-class mentality is our most distinguishing characteristic"). Thus, the ideal of the nation is linked to the lessening of class differences. Nationalism, national integration, and homogeneity are represented in the rise of a national bourgeoisie. In this respect, he attacks the large latifundistas who dominate rural society and exploit cheap labor. Wherever there is a monopoly of large landed estates, a two-class social structure prevails. This must be destroyed, he says, and in its stead there must emerge a system in which the ownership and control of land is vested in those who work it—communities of middle-class operators of family-sized farms would solve the problem.

Urbanization is a promising trend in Brazil, for with the mushrooming of cities and towns there has been an accompanying diffusion of transportation and communication facilities. There has been an increasing division and specialization of labor, accompanied by the rise of a middle class. There is hope that the "new middle class" will dominate in the decades ahead. Smith refers to the process of "homogenization of society" and to the reduction in differences in the urban ways of life in Brazil. "Much like Spencer's concept of evolution," he states, "it results in far greater uniformity between ever increasing heterogeneities" (p. 231).

These notions of evolution and progress, homogeneity and order, are evident in Raine's look at Brazilian politics. The very title, *Brazil. Awakening Giant*, implies some inevitable progress. This is a book by a former American diplomat who spent several years in Brazil. He is optimistic. Brazil is a force to reckon with. It has moved on to the world scene. Its "economic miracle" has brought economic progress and basic reforms. According to Raine, an appraisal of Brazil must bear in mind "the fusion of Amerindian, European, and African races, for despite this diversity a society with a unified sense of identity and a minimum of social friction has resulted" (p. ix). The progress of Brazil, he believes, may serve as the "model" for countries in Latin America and elsewhere.

Unfortunately Raine's work is not the "balanced understanding" of Brazil's problems to which Lincoln Gordon alludes in a brief introduction. It is basically an apology for the present government. It adopts a traditional political science approach to the study of the Brazilian political system and mixes with this approach some recent jargonistic concepts of the discipline. Thus, we are presented with a description of the people and society, the legal-formal framework of government, the political parties and electoral process, and interest groups. In addition, the author summarizes changing economic and social patterns and reviews foreign affairs. The memoirs of an American diplomat in Brazil might have been more interesting.

Analysis of class and class differences is sorely missing in this account of political institutions. The author refers to a restratification of the social order and identifies four groups that, since 1930, have emerged in Brazilian society: the rural proletariat, the divided urban lower class, the expanded middle class, and the new urban elite. These groups, however, are not related to real events. Reference is made to the ousting of Goulart and to the replacement of the positivist motto "order and progress" by the military's motto "national security and development," but there is no discussion of the brutal repression that followed the coup. Changes in military rule during the late sixties are mentioned but there is no elaboration of the urban struggle that was waged in the major cities.

Raine places emphasis on nationalism, which he calls "the single most powerful force in Brazilian politics today, along with the drive for development" (p. 46). This growing concern with Brazil as a nation, he believes, is allowing for the overcoming of "regional and class disparities." A new austerity and stability have replaced the revolutionary period just before 1964, a period he describes as one in which "Brazil was overdeveloped politically" (p. 49).

In conclusion, Raine is convinced that Brazil will continue to grow and modernize. Military control will be replaced soon by a return to bourgeois democracy. The "ordered" society of the future will be based on Brazil's example of "how private enterprise, under able state guidance, can contribute effectively to economic development" (p. 249). The diffusion of capital and technology in Brazil will ameliorate the problems of social inequities. The military wants to build "a great nation" based on "social progress." Industrialization, a welfare state, and modernization are within view. Nowhere does this unqualified optimism contend with critiques of contemporary Brazil, especially perspectives on underdevelopment, dependency, and imperialism in the writings of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Theotonio dos Santos, and other Brazilians who have suffered from years of repression in their military-dominated country.

In summary then, Skidmore has effectively synthesized the thought and attitudes on race and nationalism. The notions of order, progress, homogeneity, and stability are identifiable in the early positivist influences of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century intellectuals. This tradition is identified, indeed embraced and carried forward by Smith who observes a mixing of races and breakdown of class differences as manifestations of the new bourgeoisie whose concerns rest with the enhancement of the nation through order and progress. Raine's discussion nicely complements that of Smith by updating these propositions.

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