

## RECENT SOVIET EFFORTS IN LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

- SOVREMENIE PROZAIKI LATINSKOI AMERIKI (CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICAN PROSE). By S. P. MOMONTOV. (Moscow: Latin American Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1972. Pp. 117.)
- KHUDOZHESTVENNOIE SVOIEOBRAZIIIE LITERATUR LATINSKOI AMERIKI (THE ARTISTIC INDIVIDUALITY OF LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE). By I. A. TERTERIAN. (Moscow: Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Institute of World Literature, 1976. Pp. 363.)
- ETAPI BOLSHOVO PUTI (STAGES ALONG THE GREAT PATH). With an Introduction and Conclusion by VICTOR VOLSKII. (Moscow: Latin American Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1969. Pp. 57.)
- LATINSKAIA AMERIKA: STUDENCHESTVO I REVOLUTSIONII PROTSESS (LATIN AMERICA: THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS). By B. M. MERIN. (Moscow: Latin American Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1975. Pp. 283.)
- TEORIA PERIFIINOI EKONOMIKI (THEORY OF PERIPHERAL ECONOMIES). By B. E. IAROSHEVSKII. (Moscow: Editorial Misl, 1973. Pp. 214.)

A few able scholars in the West have studied Soviet writings on Latin America; unfortunately, they are not numerous enough to give this area the coverage it deserves. Meanwhile, the Soviets are turning out more and more Latin American scholars and the number of their works is rapidly proliferating. There now exists a great mass of Soviet material on Latin America that the specialist in the field cannot afford to ignore.

The first two books under review here are collections of literary essays, and both show that Soviet writers seem to place more emphasis on the social content of literature than is true in this country. Momontov discusses Latin American prose of the last fifty to sixty years, noting the reflections of social reality in literature; M. Bilinkina, in "Stories and Reality of the Argentine Countryside," deals specifically with Horacio Quiroga and Alfredo Varela; I. Vini-chinko, in "Popular Writers of Chile," discusses the writings of Francisco Coloan; T. Goncharov's "Novelist José Maria Arguëdes as a New Stage in the Development of Peruvian Indianism" stresses Arguëdes' importance. All of the authors seem to have a good basic knowledge of their subject. The essays by H. Konstantinov, "Contrasts in Brazilian Reality (Graciliano Ramos)," and I. Lapin, "Personalism to Contemporaneousness (On the Creativity of Carlos Fuentes)," seem to be the best, but this may be due to greater knowledge of Mexican and Brazilian literature on the part of this reviewer. Lapin sees Fuentes as a leader in the literary trends of Latin America and thinks his real genius is in showing the universal traits of the Mexican experience. Konstantinov praises the works of Ramos for showing the social problems of Brazil and says that the entire "Gera-

ção da Trinta" represented social reality, even though they had their faults. There is also some textual and artistic analysis of Ramos, his literary style and his influence.

The Terterian work is divided into two parts: connections of contemporary Latin American literature with folklore, and essays on nationalism and regionalism as types of prose. The article by Terterian himself, "Negro Tendencies in Twentieth-Century Brazilian Literature," is probably the best essay in the first part. The author discusses black theater and poetry as well as prose. He also examines social conditions, such as racial prejudice in Brazil and the Negro movement there. He gives more weight to the influence of the 1917 Russian Revolution on the black movement than perhaps is warranted, and he considers the growth of regionalist writing, especially writing on the Northeast, to have been an important corollary of the black movement in Brazil. Gilberto Freyre receives special mention; the importance of Jorge Amado is emphasized even more—he considers *Jubiaba* a landmark of black influence on Brazilian literature. Terterian has published earlier works on Latin American, especially Brazilian, literature, so we might expect his work to be of fairly high caliber. The second section also contains another essay on Mexico, "On Some National Traits of Mexican Prose," by V. Kuteishchukova, which is a competent review of the subject. We might complain that he does not mention Samuel Ramos, a writer that many would consider essential or at least important in the study of modern Mexican literature.

The best essay in the collection is V. Zemkov's "Some Special Traits of Venezuelan-Colombian Prose." The author, obviously very knowledgeable about his subject, has already published books on the literature of these two countries. Zemkov emphasizes the works of Rómulo Gallegos and Jorge Isaacs, although other writers are not neglected, and shows how the literatures of Colombia and Venezuela have affected one another. He discusses the influences of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and his concept of "civilization-barbarism" as an interpretation of Latin American society; of the Indianist novels of the Andean countries; of French, North American, and other foreign writers; and of the "Telluric" novel. He also discusses the impact that social conditions in these countries have had on their literature. All of this is clearly presented; social conditions, literary style, and artistic merit are interwoven skillfully in this well-balanced exposition (also, Zemkov does not get too hung up in Marxist dogma). All in all, an outstanding piece of writing.

*Stages along the Great Path* is a brief collection of papers presented in Moscow in 1968 to celebrate the start of the Cuban revolt against Spain in 1868, known as the Ten Years' War. The essays, however, cover aspects of the Cuban Liberation movement against Spain, and later the United States, up to the time of the meeting. There is an introduction and conclusion by Victor Volskii, who has been director of the Latin American Institute since 1966. The five additional essays cover José Martí, selecting passages from his work that support a socialist and anti-United States view, and Antonio Maceo in the building of Cuban nationalism. Essays bringing the Cuban struggle up to date conveniently overlook the fact that the Cuban Communist Party helped Batista on occasion and did not

support Castro until the last minute before his takeover in January 1959. Aside from these weaknesses, the articles are all basically sound and solid. A Latin American specialist has nothing to learn from them, but they might serve as a good introduction for someone who is not a scholar in the field. None of the articles has anything definitive to say, which leads to the conclusion that this session was more to commemorate an anniversary than to turn out original monographic historical studies. Volskii's remarks are mostly greetings to the Cuban Revolution and thus more propaganda than anything else. As noted, Volskii is an old Latin Americanist and is capable of greater depth. To sum up, a fair selection of elementary essays on Cuban history.

The main thesis of Merin's work is that the student movement is playing (and will play) an important role in the Marxist-Leninist movement in Latin America. He points out that students have been leaders in a number of past revolutions: Cuba, 1933 and 1959; Guatemala, 1944; Venezuela, 1958; and Bolivia, 1964. Views of certain "bourgeois" sociologists are roundly condemned because they have underestimated the importance of the student movement and its influence in bringing about political change—Kalman Silvert, Myron Glazer, Richard Walter and others are included in this group. Silvert is criticized for having failed to note the influence of the proletariat on the student movement and the connection between the two. He is also scored for having considered that students play a stabilizing role in society.

The first chapter, "Social Structure and the Student Movement," is concerned with the social origins of students as well as the total social structure. Merin continues with "Social Functions of the Government and the Role of the University," "The Cordoba Reform of 1918 and the Founding Stage of the Student Movement in Latin America," "The University and the Political Struggle," and "The Form of Student Struggles in Different Countries of Latin America." In "The Ultraleft, Trotskyite and Maoist Groups in the Student Movement," which begins with a long quote from Leonid Brezhnev, we learn Merin's views of these movements. Despite the "adventurism" and other mistakes of the ultraleft, and the "petty bourgeois" ideologies of the Trotskyites and Maoists, true Marxist-Leninists (Communists of the Soviet variety) are winning out in the student movement; anyway, this is what we are told in the last chapter, "The Communist Party and the Student Movement."

Whether one agrees with Merin's views or not, he has read widely in the field and is apparently quite knowledgeable. The book is well-organized and has an excellent bibliography and footnotes with sources in several languages. Although the quality of printing is so poor that it causes eye-strain, this is still valuable reading for anyone seriously interested in the subject.

*The Theory of Peripheral Economies* is part of a series of works on current "bourgeois" economic theories. The main idea here is that Latin America is a peripheral economic area of western civilization. After World War II, says the author, western economists began to propound "seditious" theories on the economies of backward countries, regarded as separate from the economies of advanced countries. Meanwhile, some Latin American thinkers were beginning to see that the economies of backward and advanced countries were not unre-

lated; that their backwardness could not be studied adequately apart from the advanced countries, as western economists were attempting to do. These Latin American thinkers were influenced by the great depression, by Keynesian economics, and by Marxism-Leninism. The theory of development of backward countries, Iaroshevskii tells us, has come out of the ideas of the "peripheral" economists.

Iaroshevskii himself says that his work is a theoretical-historical analysis of the leading principles of this theory and the major works by "peripheral" economists. He emphasizes the ideas of Raúl Prebisch, Celso Furtado, and Jorge Ahumada, and credits Prebisch as the founder of this school of thought in Latin America. Although these writers are not full-fledged Marxist-Leninists, they at least perceive the exploitation of Latin America by outside capitalist countries; they talk about government planning and nationalization of industry; and they are critical of capitalism. Iaroshevskii also discusses other aspects of the theory, such as the debate between "structuralist" and "monetarist" economists, and covers writers other than the three mentioned above. The book has many graphs, charts, and statistics on growth rates, unemployment, and other economic phenomena. This is a well-researched work that does a good job of analyzing developmental economic theory from a Soviet Marxist-Leninist viewpoint and should be profitable reading for scholars interested in the impact of dependency theory on Soviet thinking.

Soviet writers are sympathetic to certain aspects of dependency theory, especially when it attacks the capitalist system. However, whereas some western writers consider dependency theory too radical, the Soviets think it is not radical enough and see in it numerous bourgeois influences. For example, some dependency writers worry that revolution and the nationalization of industry will lead to some kind of authoritarianism; the Soviet writers believe that the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential to the successful consummation of any revolution. At this point, the Soviets may have something to say to us. Western dependency writers often consider themselves good Marxists, but to the Soviets, they are bourgeois thinkers who have adopted some ideas from Marx and use them to criticize some things about capitalism. We sometimes overlook just how much dependency writers are in the western tradition of scholarship. Iaroshevskii especially notes that the Latin American dependency writers were influenced by their own Latin traditions.

The Soviet work on dependency gives a new slant to things, which provides some food for thought. On the other hand, they are somewhat limited by an official Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy and their scholarship is certainly no more informative than that of the better western scholars. The works on Latin America also tell us something about the Soviets themselves: as noted earlier, for example, Merin blasted Maoist influence in the student movements of Latin America, an indication of the ideological rift between Russian and Chinese communism.

In spite of their faults, none of these books is without merit and, although diverse, these works are fairly representative of Soviet writing on Latin America over the past few years. They are studying Latin America increasingly and are

*Latin American Research Review*

turning out more and better publications. Whatever one thinks of their interpretations, there are now a number of well-researched works by Soviet scholars that deserve attention in this country and, although some good work has been done in this regard, we need more translations from the Russian.

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