

decades have also been inefficient in obtaining the desired degree of economic development, for their achievements have fallen far short of the optimistic projections made in the early 1950s. It would seem that neither evolution nor revolution provides a clean escape from the vicious circle of economic underdevelopment which Gunnar Myrdal and others have described.

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*Politics and the Labor Movement in Latin America.* By VÍCTOR ALBA. Stanford, 1968. Stanford University Press. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 404. \$12.50.

Víctor Alba possesses impressive credentials for undertaking a survey of the Latin American labor movement, and his latest writing justifies his high reputation among Latin Americanists. It is built upon two earlier labor histories which appeared in France (1953) and in Mexico (1963).

*Politics and the Labor Movement in Latin America* is divided into three sections. The first provides a brief but excellent introduction to societal relationships in Latin America from the colonial era to the present and establishes the environment in which workers' associations evolved. Part II delineates the main ideological movements which have sought labor's favor. In general, Alba's pattern of presentation is to discuss anarcho-syndicalism, socialism, Communism, and populism in terms of the nature of each movement, its role in a number of specific countries, and its international affiliations and activities. Part III reviews unionism in each of the Latin American nations and then concludes with an analysis of the contradictions facing labor and of the prospects for resolving basic problems.

In the aggregate, this is a well-researched and interestingly written work, and the author shows a talent for making interpretative points concisely and clearly. In his ideological section, for example, he explains anarchism's appeal to workers as resulting primarily from the fictional nature of political life. That is to say, a purportedly democratic political process was so riddled with defects as to convince the workers that the political system offered no hope for solving their economic claims. "Thus the appeal of anarchism—with its promise of direct action, its extreme ethical severity" (p. 38). For its part, socialism failed to achieve importance as an organized movement except in those few countries experiencing a heavy immigration from Europe. Nonetheless, its ideological precepts spread throughout the continent, and today socialism influences all political and

economic currents. On the other hand, a "history of the labor movement in Latin America could be written with no more than passing reference to Communism" (p. 118). Alba contends that, whereas Communism did win supporters among intellectuals and certain middle sectors who in turn exercised some sway over organized labor, it never attained any major status among the workers themselves.

Throughout his study the author details the incongruities and difficulties which plague organized labor in Latin America. He sees unionism suffering from excessive governmental control, internal bureaucratization, and unfortunate manipulative characteristics. Furthermore, workers find themselves in the contradictory position of needing to change the social structure in order to strengthen their situation, yet holding to the status quo for fear of being pushed from their relatively privileged standing in society.

The reviewer found only a few items with which to take issue. Occasionally, especially in the country studies, the author leaves his reader wondering why some matters are as they are. Thus, why is it that both of Colombia's principal confederations belong to ORIT, but cannot find a common ground for merger? (The impasse could have been explained by personality and doctrinal differences which separate them.) Or, has "rigid discipline" (p. 253) been the Communists' only organizational advantage in gaining them a preeminent position in Chile's single important confederation? (Among other factors, a word on the Labor Code's general prohibition of salaried union officers and the manner in which this has accrued to the Communists' favor, might have given more perspective to the problem.) It seemed to the reviewer that the unique nature of the Chilean Socialist Party was ignored in Chapter 5. Moreover, was there really a Chilean women's union called "Unión es Fuerza of Negreiros" (p. 248)?

Still, the balance of the book is overwhelmingly on the positive side; Víctor Alba's presentation of rich new data and insightful interpretations regarding a fascinating slice of group politics in Latin America can only expand his already large circle of admirers.

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*Strategische Elemente der Revolution Steigender Erwartungen in Lateinamerika.* By ISMAEL SILVA-FUENZALIDA. Dortmund, 1968. Universität Münster. Kontaktprogram zur Sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschung in Lateinamerika. Arbeitsunterlage zur Lateinamerikaforschung. Notes. Pp. 129. Paper.