

ARGENTINE SOCIAL SCIENCE: THE CONTRIBUTION OF CICSO

- LUCHA DE CALLES, LUCHA DE CLASES.* By BEBA BALVÉ, JUAN CARLOS MARÍN, MIGUEL MURMIS ET AL. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones La Rosa Blindada, 1973. Pp. 208.)
- TIPOS DE CAPITALISMO Y ESTRUCTURA DE CLASES.* By MIGUEL MURMIS. *LA FORMACIÓN DE LA SOCIEDAD ARGENTINA: 1500–1800.* By CARLOS RAMIL CEPEDA AND MARIO PÉRSICO. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones La Rosa Blindada, 1974. Pp. 139.)
- HISTORIA ECONÓMICA Y SOCIAL DE CHACO.* By DIEGO PIÑEIRO AND MERCEDES CARACCILO DE BASCO. (Buenos Aires: Cuadernos de CICSO, serie estudios 11, n.d. Pp. 76.)
- LA ESTRUCTURA PRODUCTIVA SANJUANINA Y LOS SECTORES SOCIALES.* By MARIO BOLEDA. (Buenos Aires: Cuadernos de CICSO, Informe Preliminar de Primera Etapa, n.d. Pp. 74.)
- LA ESTRUCTURA SOCIOECONÓMICA LOCAL EN UNA COLONIA TUCUMANA: CAMPESINOS Y EMPRESARIOS. OCUPACIÓN Y ESTRATIFICACIÓN SOCIAL ENTRE LOS OBREROS DE LA FINCA CAÑERA TUCUMANA.* By HEBE VESSURI. (Buenos Aires: Cuadernos de CICSO, serie reimpresiones 2, n.d. Pp. 56.)
- ESTUDIO SOBRE LA DIVISIÓN DEL TRABAJO EN EL PROCESO PRODUCTIVO, 1971–1972.* By ELIDA MARCONI. (Buenos Aires: Cuadernos de CICSO, serie estudios 9, n.d. Pp. 89.)
- TRABAJO ASALARIADO, CAPITAL, Y VALOR DE CAMBIO (ANÁLISIS DE LA TEORÍA DE ADAM SMITH SOBRE EL VALOR DE CAMBIO).* By HORACIO CIAFARDINI. (Buenos Aires: Cuadernos de CICSO, serie análisis 2, n.d. Pp. 66.)
- EVALUACIÓN DE PROYECTOS EN UNA COYUNTURA DE LUCHA DE CLASES (CHILE 1973).* By LUCIO GELLER AND ANGEL SCIARA. (Buenos Aires: Cuadernos de CICSO, serie polémica 4, n.d. Pp. 38.)
- EL CONCEPTO DE LA CRISIS POLÍTICA.* By JUAN CARLOS PORTANTIERO. (Buenos Aires: Cuadernos de CICSO, serie cursos 5, n.d. Pp. 157.)
- EL PODER ECONÓMICO EN LA ARGENTINA.* By JORGE ABOT, MÓNICA ABRAMZÓN ET AL. (Buenos Aires: Cuadernos de CICSO, serie reimpresiones 1, n.d. Pp. 98.)

One of the many ironies of recent Argentine history was the remarkable achievement of Argentine social science in the decade preceding the Videla regime. Social and political analyses made new breakthroughs at the same time as social and political institutions steadily unravelled. In the face of frequent financial and political reversals, recurrent purges of the social science faculties in the universities, and alternating moods of optimism and pessimism over the nation's fortunes, Argentine social science flourished, becoming the most diverse and dynamic phenomenon of its kind in Latin America. Although the sources of this movement lie within Argentina's own intellectual traditions, given new

impetus by Germani's pioneering work in the 1950s at the University of Buenos Aires and the catalytic role of the Di Tella institute in the 1960s, it was enriched by the influence of North American empiricism, French structuralism, and European neo-Marxist theory. The overwhelming preoccupation of Argentine intellectuals with the unfolding tragedy of their nation's history has been a constant motivating force.

One of the distinguishing features of this activity has been the extent to which it has been centered in independent institutes, somewhat sheltered from the political vicissitudes that affected universities. The Instituto Torcuato Di Tella became the best-known example, but several other centers also came to be established, such as the Fundación Bariloche, the Centro de Investigaciones en Ciencias Sociales (CICSO), and the Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad (CEDES). The Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO) was founded in Buenos Aires to act as a coordinating mechanism for these and other such institutes throughout Latin America.

The development of Argentine social science has been severely hampered, however, by the policies of the Videla regime, which has been suspicious of the social sciences in general, and sociology and political science in particular. Not only has the financial crisis made research and publication extremely difficult, but social sciences have been largely eliminated from university curricula and many scholars have disappeared or are scattered into exile. The repression of intellectuals suspected of Marxist sympathies has been severe. Whether Argentine social science will be able to continue with its previous vigor is very much open to question.

This background serves as a point of reference for the examination of a series of publications emanating in the late 1960s and early 1970s from CICSO, one of the most productive institutes. CICSO was founded by a group of young social scientists, many of whom worked at Di Tella in the 1960s, as an "alternative" center for cooperative research and theoretical work. As the Di Tella Institute reduced the scope of its effort, CICSO—which had begun with little more than an apartment, some furniture, and considerable enthusiasm—expanded its activities, offering courses, publishing several series of working papers, and printing books through Ediciones La Rosa Blindada. The pieces under review here are merely a sample of CICSO's production, but serve to indicate the wide range of interests expressed and the high quality of the work produced by its members.

The material reviewed includes two books published by La Rosa Blindada and seven working papers or *cuadernos* in mimeograph, of which three are research reports in the "serie estudios" and two are similar reports from the "serie reimpressiones." The "serie polémica," "serie análisis," and "serie cursos" are represented by one *cuaderno* each. With the exception of one reprint containing material originally published under the auspices of the Subsecretaría de Desarrollo, all the documents share a perspective influenced by dependency theory, French structuralism of the Althusserian school, and the writings of Gramsci. References to North American social science are conspicuously absent, though the authors are well versed in that tradition.

The most widely known work, which was a best-seller in Argentina before the coup, is *Lucha de calles, lucha de clases* by Beba Balvé, Juan Carlos Marín, Miguel Murmis et al., published in 1973 by La Rosa Blindada. The book is in three sections. The first offers a first-hand account of the demonstrations and urban street-fighting of the *viborazo* of March 1971 in Córdoba, including on-the-spot interviews by the authors. The second section is based on published accounts and presents an hour-by-hour chronology of the events of the *cordobazo* of May 1969. The third section compares and analyzes the two upheavals, examining the socioeconomic structure of Córdoba, the social actors in the struggle, and the larger significance of events in terms of Argentine patterns of dependency and development.

Lucha de calles, lucha de clases is a first-rate work, necessary for any serious student of Latin American politics. The descriptions of the *viborazo* and *cordobazo* vividly portray the drama of events, the diversity of groups involved, and the significance of rivalries and tactical splits. The analysis of Córdoba's socioeconomic structure is particularly well done, emphasizing the relative decline of Córdoba's automotive industry after an earlier period of growth and the peculiarities of a social structure characterized by sizable "lumpen" elements, a considerable marginal middle and working class ("trabajadores por su propia cuenta"), a weakened agricultural sector, and the lack of responsiveness to the local situation on the part of large, internationally owned industries. Divisions between the civil and military authorities are also well-documented, as are conflicts within the military hierarchy over the conduct of military intervention. An objective assessment is made of the relationship of state and national union politics to the urban uprisings, a useful contribution in itself. The only serious reservation of this reviewer has to do with the authors' understandable optimism in viewing the Córdoba events as a new stage in the developing consciousness of the Argentine working class. Given the preponderance of Buenos Aires economically and socially (and even the shift of the automotive industry to the Buenos Aires area), the ideological significance of the Córdoba uprisings for the national working class may have been less than suggested. Moreover, a careful reading of the differences between the *cordobazo* of 1969 and the *viborazo* of 1971 suggests that the police and military authorities learned at least as much as the working class from the former event, allowing them to minimize the social and political impact of the latter.

The second book, published by La Rosa Blindada in 1974, contains two works: a short essay, *Tipos de capitalismo y estructura de clases* by Miguel Murmis, and a longer piece on colonial dependency, *La formación de la sociedad argentina: 1500-1800* by Carlos Ramil Cepeda and Mario Pérsico. Murmis emphasizes two major points: (1) socioeconomic data show clearly that Argentine society is characterized by capitalist rather than precapitalist social relations, but with a larger petit bourgeoisie and less social polarization and economic concentration than found in advanced capitalist nations; and (2) relations in the countryside are also of intermediate character, with less concentration and capitalization than found in advanced capitalist nations, but also less *minifundismo* than found in less developed nations with extensive precapitalist agricultural sectors. Murmis ob-

serves that an analysis of social and political processes in Argentina must examine the role of the numerous local bourgeoisie that is unable to exert political hegemony due to its dependent and defensive stance relative to large, internationally financed corporations. Cepeda and Pésico present an insightful and concise overview of Argentine colonial history from a dependency perspective, focusing on Argentina's role in different stages of the Spanish empire and on its relationship to the changing world economy over three centuries. They emphasize the peripherality of colonial Argentina and the absence of capitalist relations of production in the countryside, which set the stage for the rapid transformations of the nineteenth century.

More specialized analyses are offered in the three regional studies from "serie estudios" and "serie reimpressiones." In *Historia económica y social de Chaco*, Diego Piñero and Mercedes Caracciolo de Basco develop a well-documented analysis of the rise of the Chaco economy and the impact of different sectors of production on the regional class structure. Their discussion of the organization of the cotton industry is especially thorough, followed by an examination of the crisis of that industry in the 1960s and the general decline of the provincial economy. This case study of agricultural involution sets the background for the rise of agrarian leagues in the Chaco in 1970. Mario Boleda, in *La estructura productiva sanjuanina y los sectores sociales*, offers a similar analysis of the wine industry in San Juan. While also containing a good deal of empirical data, this study has a narrower time frame and is less comprehensive in relating the various sectors of production to each other. The social sectors delineated are occupational groups in the wine-producing sector, and the study, while thorough in its coverage of the structure of production, has little to say about the relations of production.

In contrast, the relations of production are the central focus of Hebe Vessuri's study, *La estructura socioeconómica local en una colonia tucumana: campesinos y empresarios*. This remarkable work presents a rather complete picture of the wages, division of labor, organization of work, and employment patterns on a single large sugar plantation. Interviews with workers are included. The second part of the study examines the class structure of the zone of La Ramada de Abajo/La Virginia in Tucumán, divided into small, medium, and large producers. As a whole, Vessuri's work provides material essential for understanding the weaknesses of a social system based on sugar production and the related rise of Tucumán as the center of the rural guerrilla in Argentina.

Elida Marconi, in *Estudio sobre la división del trabajo en el proceso productivo 1971–1972*, also uses a case-study method to examine the relations of production in three situations: a small metallurgical shop, an inner-tube factory of medium size, and a large, technologically sophisticated chemical plant. Marconi's findings indicate the reduced role of special skills in the production lines of more advanced technologies, the lack of career mobility for workers, and the greater stratification associated with higher technology and plant size. She concludes that "the loss of the worker's professional career, of his professional autonomy, and concretely, the reduction of occupational mobility in the workers' sector of the enterprise, to the extent to which the division of labor in the productive

process is developed, is the result of the limitation of the power of decision and the participation of variable capital in the productive process relative to constant capital" (p. 81, reviewer's translation).

The range of CICOSO's interests is further demonstrated by Horacio Ciarfardini's piece, *Trabajo asalariado, capital, y valor de cambio* from "serie análisis." This tightly argued critique of Smith's exchange theory of value argues that it is essentially "fetichist" in conception. Equally theoretical, though more contemporary in focus, is *Evaluación de proyectos en una coyuntura de lucha de clases* (Chile 1973), by Lucio Geller and Angel Sciara, in "serie polémica." Geller and Sciara, writing in Chile shortly before the coup, argue that investment decisions to be taken by the Unidad Popular government should not be evaluated in terms of current prices, due to distortions brought about by the social conflict of the period, but rather should employ the system of "shadow pricing" suggested by Little and Mirrless. The argument is carefully developed by an analysis of the transition to socialism that examines the arguments of Marx, Bettleheim, Balibar, and Dobb. The paper is a pioneering attempt to suggest economic policy benchmarks in such a period of transition, an important issue usually ignored in favor of social and political questions.

El concepto de la crisis política ("serie cursos") by Juan Carlos Portantiero is of particular interest to those interested in the theoretical debates that inform much of CICOSO's work. Portantiero, together with Murmis, is also coauthor of the classic study "El movimiento obrero en los orígenes de peronismo," published by Di Tella. *El concepto de la crisis política* consists of ten lectures, apparently tape recorded, since they include discussions between Portantiero and students, in which Portantiero examines the major opus of Marxist theory applicable to political crisis. Close consideration is given to the contributions of Marx, Lenin, Mao, Trotsky, Gramsci, and Althusser. The Russian and Chinese revolutions are reviewed, and Portantiero devotes one session to the Argentine political crisis. His lectures are lucid, sound, and maintain a high level of theoretical sophistication. Moreover, Portantiero shows an engaging frankness in noting gray areas, as when he comments with respect to Mao's theory of contradictions, "Acá el texto aparece a mi un poco confuso."

The remaining piece reviewed, published under the title *El poder económico en la Argentina* ("serie reimpressiones"), by Jorge Abot, Mónica Abramzón et al., is a compilation of three studies published in different departments of the Subsecretaría de Desarrollo in 1971, 1972, and 1973. The first study, "La concentración en la industria argentina en 1964," contains extensive data showing that larger, more sophisticated industries contributed a disproportionate share of the national product, were more efficient, and paid higher wages. Foreign-owned enterprises were larger and more concentrated than Argentine enterprises. The study clearly demonstrates the comparative advantages possessed by foreign firms even before their great expansion in the decade after 1964. The second study, "Un proceso de sustitución de importaciones con inversiones extranjeras: el caso argentino," presents data indicating that foreign investment since 1955 has led to the concentration of production, rising unemployment, a reduced share of wages in industrial income, increasing foreign domination of major

enterprises, and more severe pressure on the balance of payments. The third study, "La consolidación hegemónica de los factores extranacionales: el caso de las cien empresas industriales más grandes," shows the rapid growth since 1956 of foreign-owned firms among the one hundred largest enterprises in Argentina. In 1956, 25 percent of the one hundred largest firms were majority-owned by foreign capital; by 1971 the figure had risen to 62 percent. Foreign capital was associated with fully 79 percent of the largest firms and also accounted for 79 percent of the combined production of the largest firms. The three studies dramatically outline the restructuring of the Argentine economy since Perón's fall in 1955 and the process referred to by Argentines as the "desnacionalización" of industry.

Taken as a whole, the works reviewed serve in their entirety as ample testimony to the diversity and vitality of CICSO's interests. Although some North American readers may be put off by the terminology employed, one cannot fail to be impressed by the wide-ranging concerns of the papers, the generally high intellectual quality of the work, and the relevance of CICSO's overall contribution to the analysis of Argentine society at both provincial and national levels. The studies convey a sense of shared theoretical concern, of a common project, that is all too often missing at comparable North American institutes. It can only be hoped that future conditions will allow this valuable intellectual enterprise to continue.

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