

# RESEARCH ON THE URBAN WORKING CLASS AND ORGANIZED LABOR IN ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, AND CHILE: WHAT IS LEFT TO BE DONE?

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## INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH THE VOLUME OF RESEARCH ON LATIN AMERICA HAS INCREASED MARKEDLY in the past decade or so, major topics remain neglected. One of these encompasses the urban working class (wage labor) and worker organizations. This situation, however, is changing. Scholars today are opening new lines of investigation and are applying fresh criteria to existing data in order to formulate working hypotheses and test older theories about organized labor and the working class in Latin America. This article presents a brief, highly selective analysis of new and traditional materials available for Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. It treats the urban sectors and labor in modernized enclaves in rural areas almost exclusively; related topics such as peasant unions and rural labor in general fall outside its scope. It outlines areas and problems that future investigators might probe and also presents some hypotheses. Perhaps most important, it attempts to orient future investigators in the field.<sup>1</sup>

We have divided the article into three parts. The first discusses studies on worker organizations, political parties, and ideologies. The second highlights relationships between elites and workers, concentrating on populism, over-all socio-economic development, labor legislation, and worker attitudes. The last treats two related aspects of the international dimension: the application of theories and techniques developed outside the continent, and connections between the world economy and Latin America as they affect the working class.

## I. STUDIES ON THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Before examining specific research, a brief word on hemispheric overviews is in order. Several works encompass the entire sweep of Latin American labor history. Their very breadth of scope, however, prevents comprehensive or in-depth analysis and leads the authors to weigh disproportionately the evidence which supports their point of view. Most writers in this group (Alexander, 1965; Burnett and Poblete Troncoso, 1960) reflect the anti-Communist line of both the United States government and the AFL-CIO in depicting good guys (i.e. "democrats") and bad guys (i.e. "totalitarians"). Among other works, Alba's (1969) account suffers from similar defects but its length allows for more detail. Rama's (1959) chronology provides a wealth of factual information particularly about pre-1900 worker movements.

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Other writers have generated tighter conceptual formulations. Landsberger (1966), for example, offers a number of general hypotheses about Latin American labor which call for systematic empirical study. He argues that organized labor has become less ideological and less "extreme" (i.e. revolutionary) over time, asserting that its goals are economic rather than ideological. He outlines a number of the structural limitations on its strength, such as the relatively low degree of industrialization and the capital-intensive nature of many of the continent's major manufacturing enterprises.

Turning to those studies which concentrate upon Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, we first mention some general surveys (Jobet, 1955a; Segall, 1953b; Basbaum, 1962; Puiggrós, 1965–1969; Ramos, 1972). All highlight the role of labor and the working class, and they relate economic development or the lack of it to worker and/or movement strategies. Although at times tendentious (e.g. Basbaum, pro-Communist; Ramos, ultra-left nationalist), they still provide more insight into the dialectic between the working class and the economy than other efforts.

Several authors concentrate on shorter time spans but maintain similar focus. Three examples are Carone (1970), whose examination of social structure of the Old Republic in Brazil includes substantial data on workers; Petras's (1969) analysis of political parties and socio-economic trends in pre-Allende Chile; and Ianni (1971), who details, among other matters, Brazilian government wage policies between 1930 and 1970. In addition, works like Hirschman's (1963) provide valuable information about a key topic. In explicit contrast to Lenin, his study of Chile argues that inflation can serve to head off rather than provoke civil war—an ironic statement in view of recent events. Stein's (1957) book on Brazilian cotton manufacture is one of the few of its kind to include information about the labor force.

Studies covering the development of organized labor exist for all three countries, but they vary greatly in quality. Despite the fact that more has been written on Argentina than on our other two countries, the most solid overviews treat Brazil and Chile. Barria Serón's (1967a) short history provides an introduction to the Chilean labor movement. Gurrieri (1969) offers a cogent and informative set of hypotheses relating changes in labor organization and worker consciousness to changes in the mode of production. The combination of detail and broad scope in Angell (1972) makes his the best single volume on Chile. J. Rodrigues (1968) and L. Rodrigues (1966) also provide excellent overviews for Brazil. A spate of works exist on the Argentine movement (Belloni, 1960; Casaretto, 1945–1946; Fernández, 1935–1937; Iscaro, 1958; López, 1971; Oddone, 1949). But Baily (1967), which concentrates on the Peronist period, remains the best general work. Many of the above, however, offer a biased view (e.g. Iscaro, Communist; Oddone, Socialist) as does Vitale's (1961) short Trotskyist sketch of the Chilean movement. Linhares' (1955) study of the early movement in Brazil reflects his personal experiences.

In many instances items which concentrate on shorter rather than longer time spans provide superior analyses. One outstanding example is Harding (1973) which concentrates on the period since 1945 in Brazil and offers a wealth of information

about the Kubitschek period. Another is Ramírez Necochea (1956), which brings to light many aspects of the Chilean labor movement in its formative years from 1850 of 1900. Less valuable but useful for the student of labor are Marotta (1960–1961), a former syndicalist leader who deals with the Argentine movement through the 1930's; Godio (1971c); Viñas (1971), who links social movements in early nineteenth century Argentina to worker struggles at the end of that century; E. Rodrigues (1969), who presents much information on Brazilian workers to 1913; and Telles (1962), a Communist Party labor specialist who discusses the Brazilian movement's organizational efforts from 1946 to 1962. Lastly, we should cite two journals, *Estudos Sociais* and *Revista Brasiliense*, which contain numerous articles on Brazilian labor, past and present, written by participants or scholars specializing in the field. Murmis and Portantiero's (1972) excellent work on labor before Perón will be discussed elsewhere.

Many epochs require further analysis, e.g. the 1920s in Argentina, the Popular Front period in Chile, and the first decades of the Brazilian movement. Stevenson (1942), for example, is the only study that deals principally with the Chilean Popular Front, but it sorely lacks material about labor. This period needs a study comparable to Barría Serón's (1960) solidly packed monograph on the years from 1910 to 1926 in Chile.

Other periods, however, have received considerable attention. Godio (1972), Ratzel (1969), Solomonoff (1971), and Spalding (1970) all examine Argentine labor between 1880/1890 and World War One. Ratzel concentrates on men and ideas while Spalding publishes documents that otherwise might have been forgotten. Similarly, Cárdenas *et al.* (1969), Carri (1967), Gazzara and Ceresole (1970), Senén González (1971), and Torre (1968) all focus on the Peronist labor movement and particularly its evolution under the anti-labor governments since Perón.

Another barely touched aspect of labor is the regional dimension. In Brazil for example, most attention has been given to São Paulo (Dean, 1969; Morse, 1958; Marcílio, 1965; and Simão, 1966). The first two are primarily concerned with industrialization and urban development but contain information relevant to the study of the working class in that city and state. Marcílio concentrates on the period just after World War One and particularly the general strike of 1917, but probably overestimates the level of working class consciousness and power at the time. Simão's major contribution focuses on labor organization from the formative period through 1940. He shows how Vargas' regime turned unions there into bureaucratic dispensaries of social services dependent upon the state for resources. Hall's forthcoming work, extending Hall (1969), and Maram (1972) both discuss the major pole of immigrants in paulista labor.

No regional studies have appeared to date for Chile, and monographs on the northern nitrate and copper zones as well as the southern coal mining areas are needed. Iparraquirre and Pianetto (1968) and Marianetti (1970) have begun the task of building a regional history for Córdoba and Mendoza in Argentina. Yet neither Rio de Janeiro, one early center of Brazilian labor activity, nor Rosario, once

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called the "Barcelona of Argentina," have been studied. Research in these areas would be particularly timely since it now appears that labor radicalism is shifting away from Buenos Aires, as attested to by events like the "Cordobazo" and massive peasant strikes in Río Negro and Resistencia.

Scholars have given limited treatment to specific Argentine strike movements or popular explosions. Three studies treat the *Semana Trágica* of 1919 (Babini, 1956, Godio, 1971b, Piñero, 1956); Godio's is the most scientific and exhaustive. Rural unrest in early twentieth century Argentina is just now receiving attention. Grela (1958) is a competent study of the 1912 tenant strike in Santa Fe and adjoining provinces. Viñas (1970) is a historical novel about rural unrest southwest of Buenos Aires in the 1920s and is partly based on the author's family papers. Bayer (1972) discusses the strikes and massacres in Patagonia before 1930. Two studies (Spalding 1966, 1970) unearth data on the urban tenant strike centered in Buenos Aires at the end of 1907. Recent movements have attracted some attention as well. Miglioli (1963) covers the postwar period in Brazil, highlighting strikes in the early 1960s. Delich (1970) analyses the "Cordobazo" of 1969 and Weffort (1972) studies the 1968 wildcat strikes in São Paulo. The latter argues that the post-1964 repression is forcing workers to develop greater independence from the state and that this trend may give rise to more autonomous unionism. Loyola's (1973) study of textile workers in Minas Gerais, however, indicates that in their case at least, repression since 1964 has dampened class consciousness. Still, many important events remain unresearched. No one has studied the urban riots which shook nearly every major Latin American city during or just after World War One; neither have the strikes in Chile's northern nitrate zones or the series of general strikes in Argentine prior to 1930 been scrutinized.

Three books which do not exactly fit the above categories merit attention. Bandedeira, Melo, and Andrade (1967) discuss the initial impact of the Russian Revolution on the Brazilian labor movement. Iscaro (1961) presents a chronological catalogue of events that occurred on the First of May in Argentina. Segall (1953a) explains the role which payment in script and chips played in worker exploitation and protest in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Chile.

Having looked at general surveys, period studies, and investigations of specific topics, we can turn to treatments of particular ideologies or tendencies, studies on political parties, biographies, and autobiographies. Three books, two on Communism (Alexander, 1957; Poppino, 1964) and one on Trotskyism (Alexander, 1973), examine their material on a continental basis. The anti-Marxist slant of Poppino's cursory overview greatly reduces its value. Alexander's works, rich in information drawn from interviews and newspapers, are particularly useful although they, too, suffer from a cold war anti-Communist perspective which prevents them from objectively considering the strong appeal of Marxist ideologies in Latin America. Chilcote's (1974) critical analysis of the Brazilian Communist party affords a wealth of data about the party's top figures and their political policies but does not emphasize the party's role in the labor movement.

Several authors discuss a particular ideology or tendency in one country. Colombo (1970), Dulles (1973), Leuenroth (1963), and Santillán (1930), show the many varieties of Brazilian and Argentine anarchism, particularly before the 1930s. No work portrays anarchism in Chile, where admittedly it played a lesser role. Those few books on the Catholic social reform movement and its relationship to workers are written by sympathizers (Auza, 1962 for Argentina; Magnet, 1954 on Chile; Wiarda, 1969, 1972 for Brazil). Peronist ideology or *justicialismo* remains virtually unexplored. The best effort to fathom its murky depths is Ciria (1971) who attempts to systematize its main tenets by analyzing official pronouncements.

Studies of specific political parties seem either to have been written by party members (Oddone, 1934; Pereira, 1962; Ramírez Necochea, 1965; Jobet, 1965; Chelén Rojas, 1969) or by detractors (Ramos, 1962, 1969). This means that much work is left to be done on labor and working class parties. Official histories like Ramírez Necochea's on the Chilean Communist Party or official anti-histories like Ramos's on the Argentine Communist Party are useful, but this type of work sheds meager light on a party's real workings and adds little hard data to our store of knowledge. Pinheiro (1971) provides one notable exception. His study concentrates on the early decades of the Brazilian Communist Party and its relationship to the working class. Still no adequate studies exist, for example, on Brazil's PTB\* and Argentina's Socialist Party, nor on those parties which compose the recently overthrown Unidad Popular in Chile.

Some biographies and autobiographies exist, although political circumstances have often prevented individuals from publishing memoirs. Here also the reader must filter the interpretations of writers who too often try to justify a past action or apologize for one. Romualdi (1967) and Ravines (1951) provide two examples. Romualdi, former field representative for the AFL-CIO and Executive Director of AIFLD, boldly states his aims: "The main purpose of this book is to highlight the activities and achievements of the United States labor movement in combatting the attempts of Communists and other totalitarian forces [e.g. Peronism] to gain control of organized labor . . ." (p. vii). Ravines, a Peruvian Communist based in Chile when he quit the Party in the 1930s, writes with all the rancor of an ex-communicant. His book contains fascinating material on the movement's early years, but its bias destroys credibility on important political points.

Peter (1968) and Perelman (1961) are no less interesting, even though no less prejudiced. The former, a Communist eventually purged by Perón, writes a romanticized novel while the latter, a Communist turned Peronist, greatly overstates his role in the October 17 demonstration which returned Perón to power in 1945. Two Chilean Communist leaders have written on recorded autobiographical material (Lafertte, 1956; Varás, 1968). The latter provides insights into the Party's efforts to organize in the countryside during the 1930s and after. Jobet's [*et al.*]

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\* Full names of acronyms and initials can be found in Appendix I.

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(1965) collection of the writings and speeches of Emilio Recabarren, Chile's outstanding labor leader, also qualifies here. The reminiscences of two Brazilians (Dias, 1962; Pimenta, 1949) discuss early labor struggles. Fayt (1967) contains interesting testimony on Peronism. Currently the Columbia University Oral History Program in conjunction with the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella is interviewing some former Argentine labor leaders. Hopefully such programs and individual scholars will continue to gather this invaluable testimony while it is still available.

A scattering of biographies exists. Bayer (1970), Cúneo (1956), Godio (1971a), and Jobet (1955b) comprise the best works in this category and flow from substantial research. Vitale (1961) and Autores (1971) are merely thumbnail sketches, while Bastos (1946) is party line material.

National federations and confederations, despite their importance in Chile and Argentina, remain largely unstudied. No work covers the Argentine CGT, the leading organization after 1930. Only Santillán (1933) has treated the Argentine FORA, the most important organization in terms of numbers and activity on the continent prior to 1930. Barría Serón (1963, 1971) has written two books on the Chilean CUT, both rich in detail, but other federations and confederations in that country have not received scholarly attention. Nor do studies treat, for example: the USA and UGT in Argentina; the FOCH and CTCH in Chile; or the Brazilian COB and CGT. Similarly, the powerful Argentine railroad and maritime federations of the 1920s remain neglected. On the other hand, Durruty (1969) deals extensively with the Argentine construction workers' federation in the 1930s and Callelo, Murmis, and Marín (1969) skillfully analyze the naval construction workers' federation there from its founding to the 1950s.

Almost no studies of individual unions exist for either Chile or Brazil. Exceptions are Affonso, Klein, and Ramírez (1970), an excellent first step toward compiling the history of Chilean peasant unions; and Reis (1965), an ex-leader's autobiographical study of the Brazilian national telegraph workers prior to his ouster in the 1964 coup. Four studies on Argentine entities exist but we must make note of the problems involved in using them. Agnelli and Chiti (1937), Anonymous (1944), and Fernández (1951) represent official histories of the Unión Ferroviaria, La Fraternidad (both railroad unions), and the telephone workers' union. As such they contain data often unavailable elsewhere, but the reader must bear in mind that they represent approved versions of each group's past. Peter (1947) presents a personalistic account of the meatpackers' union.

To this point we have concentrated on works which concern individuals, specific organizations, or the labor movement as a whole. Before turning to other concerns, a few generalizations are in order. Aside from those topics already indicated, others remain untouched and fundamental questions unanswered. How did mutual aid societies, the first form of working class activity in Latin America (as elsewhere), evolve into unions? Why did anarcho-syndicalism, the most dynamic ideology until the 1920s in most countries, suddenly lose its appeal? What factors enabled the

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Communist Party to make significant inroads into the ranks of organized labor after 1917 in the face of constant and severe repression? What role did reformist socialism in Argentina and to a lesser degree in Brazil play in reducing working class consciousness? Does the fact that anarchism and reformist socialism never flourished in Chile provide a clue to the later development of strong, radical working class parties there? Why, indeed, has a significant percentage of working class votes in Chile accrued to these parties? Why did specific sectors of the working class (port workers, railroadmen, miners, etc.) adopt one ideology or form of organization or another? What role have women played in the labor movement?

The following paragraphs offer a brief list of bibliographies and then focus on primary sources. Our intent is not to cite all of these but to give the reader a sense of the type of materials available and some ways they might be used.

Several general bibliographies include specific sections on labor or else a substantial listing of labor-oriented material under individual country headings. NACLA's work (Bayer and Spalding, 1973) is useful for a beginning student. Chilcote (1970) compiles a good section on bibliographies and contains a fairly comprehensive catalogue of labor and related material published between 1930 and 1965. The American Institute for Marxist Studies (1967) has published a Latin American labor bibliography, and Morris and Córdova's (1967) lengthy work focuses on labor relations. Gutiérrez (1969) is an excellent collection of materials relating to Argentine labor and the working class.

A lack of information forms one serious obstacle to the study of the working class and labor in Latin America. Many sources such as union or party archives, labor newspapers, or personal documents have been lost or destroyed. Widespread government repression, one constant in the story of Latin American labor, has often made it politically inopportune to preserve materials and has prevented publication of works treating labor. However, untapped resources, generally not available in their country of origin, exist elsewhere. To cite one example, Gordon, Hall, and Spalding (1973) list the Argentine and Brazilian holdings at the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam.

Censuses, taken at irregular intervals, unfortunately, until recently, date onwards from the late nineteenth century for all three countries. These are essential for comparative research. Census data enable us to decide whether demographic characteristics (e.g., age, sex, ethnic composition, and geographic concentration of the labor force) contribute to national variations in working class behaviour. Can such characteristics account for the consistently higher degree of organization, autonomy, and militancy of Argentine and Chilean workers compared to that of their Brazilian counterparts?

Another valuable source of raw data is the ILO's *Yearbook of Labour Statistics*. It includes runs of figures on employment, wages, and strikes, and cites its sources. Once again, however, a caveat is in order. Because the data represent official tallies, they may not include, for example, political strikes, which often can be the most

meaningful. In addition, a government frequently has a vested interest in skewing, inflating, deflating, or even suppressing data. Brazil, for example, has never published official strike records.

National labor departments or ministries exist in all three countries, those in Argentine and Chile dating from the first decades of this century and the Brazilian one from 1930. These regularly publish official figures and occasional special or topical studies which researchers can use to advantage. Brazilian data in the *Boletim Técnico do SEPT* issued by the Statistical Office of the Ministry of Labor, for example, dash Vinhas's (1970) assumption that Brazilian commercial workers receive substantially higher salaries than industrial workers.

Statistical sources also enable the scholar to lift the veil of rhetoric in evaluating government policies. An analysis of Brazilian budgets and balance sheets (Erickson, 1970) reveals that the government regularly transferred resources budgeted for labor affairs to other sectors. Government documents, furthermore, often contain far more than bureaucratic disquisitions. The Brazilian labor minister's (Passarinho, 1968) justification for a mild relaxation of a wage squeeze reveals that the government took this measure not for humanitarian reasons but because recession led industrial and commercial interests to urge an increase in purchasing power.

With official data, one may calculate an index of real wages by deflating nominal wages by a cost-of-living index. Runs of ten years or more exist for Argentina (Díaz Alejandro, 1970; Merckx, 1969; and Silverman, 1968–1969); Brazil (Fishlow, 1973; Ianni, 1971; and Langoni, 1973); and Chile (Mamalakis and Reynolds, 1967). These figures when combined with GNP data allow a calculation of the human cost, for example, of the "Brazilian economic miracle" and shed much light on the degree to which workers have paid the price for industrialization. National and regional statistical yearbooks and related publications such as Central Bank reports, ease the task of building other economic indices pertinent to the working class. São Paulo's union-sponsor DIEESE, for example, has published both hard data and brief studies on the labor movement in its *Boletim*, later the *Revista de Estudos Sócio-Econômicos*.

## II. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE, POLITICS, AND WORKER CONSCIOUSNESS

A careful study of the type of material examined above can aid researchers in the comparative labor field to build theoretical constructs. Spalding (1972; subsequently refined and expanded in Erickson, Peppe, Spalding, and Volk, 1973) taking off from Hobsbawm's (1967) work on Europe, has, for example, developed a theory of periodization for Latin American labor. They find that most of the hemisphere's labor movements pass through similar stages in their development. These stages appear most strongly conditioned by two variables: (1) the type of integration of national economies into the world economy; and (2) the specific nature of national elites. Because dominant elites in Latin America depend on foreign markets, capital, or technology, the second variable usually reflects the first. Fundamental changes in either of the two alter labor's pattern of development. A shift in the economic base of the



elites, for example, generally changes their attitudes and behavior toward the working class and labor.

In the above schema, four basic periods emerge. We label pre-formative the period prior to the first sign of organized working class activity in the late nineteenth century. The formative period, ending around World War One, marks the stage when labor first organizes on a massive scale and a clearly identifiable movement appears. The expansive and explosive period, characterized by qualitative and quantitative advances, covers World War One and the 1920s. New ideologies, particularly Communism after the Russian Revolution, provided workers' movements with fresh analyses and organizational concepts. Among other results, we see the first widespread attempts to organize the white collar workers and peasants. Large-scale worker protest, like the Argentine *Semana Trágica* of 1919, rocked all three countries in these years. In the co-optive period, the 1930s to the present, elites attempt to integrate labor into the established political and social framework through labor codes, political parties, or other mechanisms.

Although individual labor movements pass through similar stages, local factors at times accelerate or retard certain stages. Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, by and large, follow the chronology outlined above. In Bolivia, on the other hand, the stages telescope. The labor movement there, due to the nature of Bolivia's links to the world economy, moved slowly out of the pre-formative and formative periods. The Chaco War in the 1930s brought on a national disintegration which modified the character of the elites. The war also stirred the working class, which along with the peasantry, paid the highest cost. The interaction of these two factors led to an acceleration of the Bolivian movement which progressed rapidly into an expansive and explosive phase marked by the *Tesis de Pulacayo* of 1946 and extensive worker participation in the Revolution of 1952, only to pass into the co-optive stage shortly thereafter (Volk, 1972).

We hypothesize that elite structure and actions strongly influence the degree of labor's militancy and organizational autonomy. Recently several important statements have illuminated this interaction. Murmis and Portantiero's (1972) book on Argentina suggests that union autonomy correlates with the nature of the political structures prevailing at the time unions form. Those which organize in periods of relative state indifference or repression maintain a higher degree of autonomy than those which form during periods of state paternalism. In the latter, the government actively legislates industrial relations, guarantees basic rights for workers, and incorporates the working class into the national political formula. This usually occurs when those in power desire the backing of workers as voters and of their organizations as institutions which can marshal "popular" support via demonstrations, propaganda, and electoral mobilization. Unions formed in these times tend to be less autonomous and more susceptible to state control or manipulation.

This analysis raises a series of research questions. Does Murmis and Portantiero's schema apply to other countries? Can one see a clear progression, as in Argentina, from relative indifference (pre-1930), to active repression (1930-1943), to paternalism (the Peronist period)? What difference exists between unions formed during

periods of indifference, repression, and paternalism? What determines a shift by the elite from one posture to another? The following sections hopefully shed light on some of these questions.

For us, as for Murmis and Portantiero, the degree of cohesion among elites is a crucial variable. Historically, splits between agrarian and industrial elites induce periods of state paternalism in which ascendant groups (nearly always the industrial bourgeoisie or some fraction therein) seek worker support to counterbalance their rivals. In our three countries, differing patterns emerged which perhaps help explain variations in their labor histories. In Argentina, agrarian elites firmly controlled the state through the 1920s. They owned little industrial property. Urban working class organizations hardly threatened them except when strikes directly impeded the export process. As a result, relatively strong unions formed during these years. In Brazil, agrarian and industrial elites merged between 1890 and 1914 (Dean, 1969), the moment when workers first attempted to organize. This real or perceived threat led industrialists to call upon their kin to protect their interests; the resulting severe state repression all but smothered unions. In Chile, a similar merger (Pike, 1963, 1968; Zeitlin, 1968) occurred well before major working class and labor activity began. This consolidated elite, in contrast to its Brazilian counterpart, developed a sense of security and thus could afford to allow working class parties to participate, albeit under many restrictions, in formal democratic politics.

Elite structure in more recent periods conditions the alliances open to working class parties and organizations. Kenworthy (1970) indicates that tensions between established and emerging industrial elites facilitated a temporary alliance between new industrialists and workers in the Peronist period. Cardoso (1971) finds, on the other hand, that as Brazilian industrialists have become dependent upon foreign sources of capital and technology they have lost interest in political cooperation with workers. In Chile, the Frei government's hostility to labor flowed largely from its attempt to reform Chilean capitalism by a "special relationship" with the United States government and copper companies (Peppe, 1971).

The prevailing attitudes of elites or ruling parties also form a major determinant of the relations between labor and the state. Empirical research has challenged Pike's (1968) prediction that the rise of Christian Democracy in Chile would bring a new tolerance toward the working class. Johnson (1967–1968, 1972), based on surveys in the 1960s, reveals the foreign orientation and non-progressive character of Chilean industrialists and managers. Petras and Cook's (1973a, 1973b) data on Argentine industrialists point in the same direction. Despite these promising beginnings, extensive investigation remains to be done on the topic. Hopefully, future researchers of industrialists' attitudes and actions regarding capital formation will be equally sensitive to their posture vis-à-vis labor.

Any discussion of workers' political participation after 1930 must confront the phenomenon of "populism." This term refers to political movements largely based on the working class or peasantry but led by persons from higher social strata, in our case the Vargas, Goulart, and Perón governments. Early post-war writers (Blanksten,

1953; Lipset 1960) usually lumped Perón and Vargas together with Hitler, Mussolini, and Salazar under the fascist rubric. Recent work, however, challenges this interpretation (Murmis and Portantiero, 1972).

Scholars have begun to examine populist regimes more closely and to distinguish between them. One recent study (Erickson, 1974) contrasts "classical" populism with "radical" populism in Brazil. Vargas's regime from 1930 can be termed classical-populist because workers composed an important element in his coalition and he certainly relied on populist rhetoric which promised workers a vast improvement in status (Ianni, 1970). The Perón era at least to 1950, Vargas's final two years (1953–1954), and Brazil under Goulart in 1963 and 1964 conform to the radical populist model. In radical populist periods ruling politicians not only offer social security and other material benefits to workers but even promise them a role in political decision making. Support of populist leaders, however, does not necessarily increase workers' material well-being or political power. In the Brazilian case, for example, the heightened pro-labor rhetoric of radical populists merely served to obscure the reduction of public services to the working class. Populism further impeded the development of strong working-class institutions, facilitating the coup of 1964 and subsequent redistribution of workers' income into upper- and middle-class pockets, a phenomenon which also occurred in Argentina after 1950.

Recent research has produced changing interpretations about the Peronist period, too.<sup>2</sup> Kenworthy (1970) helps explain one cause of the Argentine wage decline by suggesting that Perón expended so much of his political and economic capital to form and maintain a coalition that he soon had little left to devote to new policy alternatives or even to maintain the same sectoral distribution as in the first years in office. Silverman (1968–1969) shows how concrete results for workers and the national economy fell short of expectations, particularly after 1950, and he blames this on the lack of a comprehensive ideology. Ciria (1971) underscores the latter point and suggests that both detractors and supporters vastly overstate Perón's radicalism.

Despite similarities in Argentine and Brazilian populism, workers played a critically different role in each. Brazilian workers were unable to develop strong autonomous organizations before Vargas co-opted them in the 1930s. As a result, they never rose above the level of political clients. On the other hand, Argentine unions maintained their organizational integrity through the repressive 1930s. They thus could constitute a needed lever in Perón's rise and for a time even gain limited input into the political system. Interpretations of this dynamic vary, however.

Baily (1967) and to a lesser degree Cúneo (1965) argue that a shift in the social composition of the labor force enabled Perón's triumph. Drawn to the cities by the agricultural depression and industrial expansion of the 1930s, native Argentine workers from the interior gradually outnumbered immigrant workers who had formed the bulk of the industrial labor force. These new industrial workers had little previous political or organizational experience. For them, Perón represented a *criollo*, nationalist *caudillo*, and he easily organized them as the core of his labor support.

Murmis and Portantiero (1972) have called for a modification of this view.

They show that the established trade union movement, whose demands the government and employers consistently denied during the 1930s, willingly and actively mobilized on Perón's behalf. Durruty's (1969) research on that decade supplies evidence to support this conclusion. Established unions, moreover, resisted government manipulation. Therefore, to secure a compliant labor movement, Perón had to eliminate their leadership. This he accomplished soon after coming to power by placing men loyal to himself in key positions, sacking even those who had actively mobilized their constituencies for him.

Populism represents one strategy by which workers have been co-opted. Since the first decades of the twentieth century, labor legislation has been used for similar ends as well as to hinder workers' ability to organize (e.g., J. Morris, 1966). Such legislation, for example, not only fragments working class movements but also stringently regulates union activity. The Chilean labor code, for example, requires separate unions for blue collar workers, white collar workers, those in state enterprises, and peasants. Collective bargaining is restricted to each individual workplace. Since 25 members are required to form a union and most industrial plants employ fewer than that, the law sharply curtails workers' organization. The higher salary and better social security arrangements of white-collar workers accentuate differences between segments of the working class (Gregory, 1967; Mamalakis and Reynolds, 1965). Amendments to the labor code, however, allow industry-wide collective bargaining for leather and shoe workers. Other modifications exist for the copper industry (Barria Serón, 1967b; Valdés, 1968). But in both cases, it took years of strike action to persuade employers to seek these new legal formulas for stability.

More research might clarify how effectively the code conditioned workers' attitudes and activities in the pre-Allende period. One survey (Peppe, 1971) reveals strong worker opposition to the labor code and interprets the growth of illegal strikes in the 1960s as a sign of resistance to state control. On the other hand, Valenzuela (1970) argues that records of contract negotiations show that even when workers strike illegally they still conform in most respects to the code's complicated procedures.

The architects of Brazil's corporative state compartmentalized labor differently but with the same intent of reducing its autonomy. There, the law provides for county-wide (*município*) industrial unions rather than plant-based ones and carefully restricts inter-union cooperation. Controls over finances confine union activities to dispensing medical, dental, legal, and social services.

Many observers saw labor breaking this legal straitjacket through the "political" strikes of the 1960s. In fact, these strikes paralyzed the economy not because of union heads' organizational and leadership ability but because of tacit or overt agreement of the Labor Ministry and military not to crush them (Erickson, 1970, 1971). In Argentina, bitter political battles over the Ley de Asociaciones Profesionales and periodic amendments to it (e.g., 1945, 1956, 1958, 1966, 1967 and 1973) attest to the importance of legal provisions there (Alexander, 1962).

Labor law varies in form from country to country (U.S., 1959, 1962, 1967), a fact that Alexander (1962) attributes to differences in national political systems.

Yet, political elites everywhere clearly established such laws out of a common desire to insure a stable and growing capitalist economy. This is openly reflected in the proposals of Frei's labor ministry (Thayer Ojeda, 1968) to reform the Chilean code. Along with most industrialists (Fuchs and Santaibáñez, 1967), he sought to further Chile's capitalist development by imposing even more debilitating restrictions on labor.

Labor law in our countries is extremely complex and regulates virtually every aspect of worker activity. For administrative or political reasons, its provisions are often selectively or arbitrarily applied. Social scientists could profitably ask: which provisions are consistently enforced or flouted; what determines whether a particular portion of a code is enforced or not; what political, economic, or social circumstances govern such selectivity? Do enforcement patterns differ in democratic as opposed to authoritarian periods? Is collective bargaining altered under radical reformist governments? (Compa, 1973) Does the imposition of factory-based rather than county-wide unions in Chile lead to greater rank and file activism than in Brazil? Labor and social security legislation have created myriad public sector jobs in Brazil which serve to co-opt potentially militant labor leaders (Erickson, 1972). Does such co-optation and its inevitable politization of top labor positions increase or decrease rank and file militance and autonomy? Scholars can address these and many other questions by focusing case studies on the passage of labor legislation, by dusting off labor court records to evaluate actual implementation, and by administering surveys to labor, industrial, and civil service sectors.

A growing body of survey research examines working-class consciousness, including attitudes toward industrial employment, modernization, and working class unity. Scholars in São Paulo have explored factory workers' attitudes toward their jobs. Lopes (1964) and Pereira (1965), for example, found that industrial workers of rural origin hoped to escape the factory environment, return to the land, and/or establish their own businesses. Does this hope merely reflect a desire to avoid the exploitation accompanying industrialization, or does it also conceal a need to control the work process? Both considerations apparently motivated Lopes's respondents.

Other scholars, however, argue against attributing major influence to workers' rural or traditional origins. Loyola's (1973) research on Brazilian textile workers indicates that type of job and political experience play the most important role in conditioning class consciousness. In her sample, production line workers and those hired before the 1964 military coup typically viewed unions as organizations of class solidarity and defense. New recruits and non-production line personnel generally perceived the union as a dispensary of social services. It thus appears that the military have altered the character of the union movement so that newer workers, at least, do not view it as an expression of class consciousness.

Two studies concerned with the traditional-modern dimension also find work setting or experience to be key factors. The Chilean research by Di Tella *et al.* (1966) contrasts the revolutionary orientation of coal miners in Lota (a traditional complex) with the reformist outlook of workers in the modern Huachipato steel mill. They

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conclude that work setting accounts for this attitudinal difference. Goodman (1972), on the other hand, hypothesizes that labor market conditions are more important than work setting in determining autonomy.

Investigators have sought to measure working class consciousness and its political implications from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Touraine and Pécaut's (1967–1968) abstract framework provides the basis for a five-nation (including our three) study. When published it should contain useful data on worker consciousness. Portes (1971) offers statistical models for examining two interpretations of Marx's concept of class consciousness.

L. Rodrigues (1970) and Weffort (1965) also explicitly link workers' attitudes and their political behavior. São Paulo auto workers in L. Rodrigues' brilliant study exhibit a strongly negative, even pathetic self-image. For them, workers are humble, crude, and poor, and are bossed around and have to obey. Manual work is dirty and degrading. The workers perceive the enterprise, a modern one paying relatively well and offering attractive fringe benefits, as the key to their social ascent, not as the cause of their poverty and degradation. They saw society divided into rich and poor rather than into social classes determined by control over the means of production. Viewing poverty and submission as natural human conditions, they felt a profound sense of resignation. Not surprisingly, these workers looked to populist politicians rather than to a united working class to improve their lot.

How have the nature and extent of industrialization affected working-class consciousness and political activity? The limited growth of the manufacturing sector and importation of capital-intensive technology have severely limited the growth of the industrial proletariat (Cardoso, 1968). Various authors agree that this has weakened labor's unity and power. Zeitlin (1968) hypothesizes that in pre-Allende Chile, a small and scattered working class could be little more than an electoral force. Landsberger (1966) concludes that limited numbers mean limited power and hence low revolutionary potential. Gurrieri (1968) suggests that in Chile the introduction of capital intensive technology has created different organizational patterns among working class segments which may ultimately weaken solidarity.

What factors, indeed, lead to worker solidarity and active union membership? A comparison between Loyola's study and a survey of textile union leaders in São Paulo (DIESE, 1961) suggests that leadership must seize opportunities offered by the political environment. Winn's (1973) study of a Chilean textile factory highlights links between the political situation and worker behavior. Prior to the Unidad Popular's victory, the domineering and paternalistic owners had fired any and all militants. Only a company union existed. Once the threat of official repression vanished, however, the apparently docile workers acted. They became the first to occupy and then manage successfully their own factory. This case buttresses Petras's (1970) assertion that workers can play revolutionary roles when supported by reformist leaders in power.

Other surveys and related work address further questions. What factors, for example, unite or divide the working class? Vanderscheuren (1972) argues that an

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"aristocracy of labor" developed among pre-Allende Chilean factory workers because they enjoyed more economic security than other urban lower class groups. Peppe (1973), however, finds that relative economic well being does not correlate with weak class consciousness. Petras and Zeitlin's (1968, 1970) ecological analyses of voting patterns in Chile show miners, agricultural wage laborers, and urban workers allied in support of Allende. They suggest, moreover, that militant workers can prove influential in mobilizing those in nearby areas. The conditions producing such alliances and extending them should be further examined to see their potential in other countries.

Additional works deserve mention. Several surveys currently under way in Argentina should reveal more about worker attitudes and Peronism. Lowy and Chucid (1962) interviewed leaders of Brazilian metal workers' unions. Freitas Marcondes (1964) surveys São Paulo labor leaders prior to the 1964 coup. And Schmitter (1971) includes lower echelon labor leaders as part of a larger sample.

These studies of worker consciousness raise important questions, but their evidence is often inconclusive and their conclusions contradictory. Do diverse rural social structures and work experiences, for example, explain the conflicting findings concerning the impact of workers' rural origins? How does previous collective and individual history affect workers' outlook? Most Latin American workers were never artisans who owned their own tools; does this lack of experience as owners of the means of production explain acceptance of their present lot? To what degree do political climate and experience influence organization, consciousness, and propensity to act? And what elements create cleavages or unity among workers?

### III. THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

We have surveyed labor and related research on Latin America and suggested directions for current work. Yet, another dimension exists. Latin American labor should not be examined in a vacuum. Two circumstances dictate that scholars look outside the area. First, techniques and theories developed for other areas can aid the study of the region's labor movement. Second, the increasing internationalization of the world economy means that events and trends elsewhere become progressively more important for Latin America.

Many European and North American journals publish articles from which Latin Americanists can benefit. To comment on two: *Sociologie du Travail* specializes in labor sociology and even has devoted an issue to Latin America (Touraine, 1961); *Le Mouvement Social* carries theoretical and historical pieces on labor and working class movements. These mostly concern Europe but can prove suggestive. Other notable publications include *Esprit*, *Les Temps Modernes*, *The Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, and the *International Labour Review*, an official organ of the ILO.

European labor studies can briefly illustrate how work on other areas might apply to Latin America. Kuczynski's (1967) work on Europe outlines methodological procedures for constructing a picture of working class life when data are scarce. Thomp-

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son (1963) finds in Britain that a distinct working-class culture existed alongside the elite-oriented middle class one. The theoretical implications of Eric Hobsbawm's (1967: 149–184) work on Europe merit consideration. He shows that in unregulated labor markets, strikes occur more frequently at the middle ranges in a worker's wage curve than at either high or low points. Spalding's (1973) research indicates that this is also true for Argentina between 1890 and 1912.

The input of North American scholars deserves attention too. Lipset (1960) has greatly influenced those researching on Latin America. His theory, for example, that the working class is predisposed to authoritarian leaders is widely quoted. Two recent questionnaire surveys, however, cast some doubt on this matter. Peppe (1971) argues that in Chile, Lipset's concept of authoritarianism, in fact, measures disillusionment with a formal democracy which has ill served the workers. Kirkpatrick's (1971) Argentine survey shows that lower class individuals had little or no greater predisposition to authoritarianism than persons from other social groups.

The previous discussion points up the fact that hypotheses developed for other areas must be concretely tested in Latin America. Valuable insights may flow from comparative analyses, though too few such studies currently exist. Soares (1968) contrasts the evolution of Brazil's social structure over two decades of industrialization with that of several presently industrial nations when they were at the same level of development. He finds in late industrializing nations the tertiary rather than secondary sector receives the population migrating from agrarian to urban areas. This reduces the size as well as the political and economic impact of the industrial proletariat. Arrighi (1970), moreover, observes that in Africa the modern industrial process has broken down formerly complex jobs, thus replacing skilled with unskilled workers. This weakens the sense of competence and bargaining power of the labor force. Landsberger (1966) and L. Rodrigues (1970) make similar observations.

The second aspect of external research involves the global economy. One of this article's basic hypotheses is that only an examination of the interplay between the world economy and elite-mass relationships in Latin America will reveal historical causal links. Indeed, the working class and labor can be profitably studied on a transnational, continental, or even broader basis. Too many common trends or phenomena arise not to pursue this line of investigation. Is it coincidental that Hobsbawm's findings apply to at least the Argentine case; that women's wages averaged between 50 and 60 percent of those of men during similar periods in Latin America, Europe, and North America; that tenants' strikes erupted simultaneously during 1907 in three major Latin American cities, Rome, and New York; or that popular unrest occurred in Asian nations as well as Latin America during the First World War? These data suggest at least two things. One, that capitalism and its relationship to the working class can be studied as a global phenomenon; and two, that the connections between metropolitan centers and lesser developed nations became stronger at an earlier date than usually assumed.

Latin American links with the world economic system have created similar pat-



terns of events in many nations within the hemisphere: the labor and popular unrest of 1914–1917; the movements primarily against large foreign companies in the 1920s and 1930s; the rise of populist regimes which courted labor support after 1930; or the whole co-optive process inaugurated by the state after 1930— all argue for viewing labor and working class history in this context.

If the primary hypothesis is correct, an examination of the growing work on dependency becomes vital. On this topic, Cockcroft, Frank, and Johnson (1972) provide a good, representative, although uneven, collection of writings. They further Frank's (1969) exploratory work as well as that of Dos Santos (1968) and Cardozo (1971). The formulation of this model is one indication of a current trend. A younger generation of social scientists sympathetic to the left has applied modern research techniques to labor and working class questions. The work of NACLA provides one example. Its monthly *Latin America and Empire Report* examines the links between corporations and United States foreign policy and highlights Latin American anti-imperialist struggles. The American Friends of Brazil, of Guatemala, of Haiti, and NICH as well as URLA all publish a newsletter or bulletin demonstrating similar preoccupations.

Research of this type can serve workers as well as the academic community. Many Latin American unions run educational programs (Cárdenas, 1966; Marischi, *et al.*, 1968). New materials can enrich workers' knowledge of their collective history and struggle.

The rapid growth of transnational corporations creates another field for labor research. The massive movement of United States corporations into the manufacturing sector in Latin America carries implications as yet not fully understood in either hemisphere. But even George Meany has recognized that the fates of the North and Latin American working classes are becoming increasingly intertwined. Strikes in the United States can now be vitiated merely by turning on production at a plant in some other country. Solidarity among workers in one nation, therefore, may no longer suffice for them to influence their own destiny. The nature and implications of this new situation must be made clear to labor in both the North and South.

Some preliminary work has begun on the international aspects of labor. Berger (1966), Langley (1972), Lens (1972), G. Morris (1967), and Radosh (1969) have researched aspects of the AFL-CIO's foreign policy and the role of International Trade Secretariats in foreign affairs. They mostly examine general patterns, but at least one case study (Bodenheimer, 1967) shows the consonance between big labor's goals and those of the State Department. Yet, key topics remain untouched. Despite evidence available in official publications like U.S. Senate (1969), the activities of AIFLD have not been adequately exposed. Jagan (1972), Lens (1967), Mellon (1973), and Spalding (1974) have done spadework on this topic. Lastly, scholars are just now examining the subtler connections between external and internal factors which affect labor and the working class. One such field is the media, largely programmed from the United States and Europe.

CONCLUSIONS

A glance at the bibliography reveals a substantial and growing body of literature on labor and the working class, much of it by younger scholars. Indeed, almost three-quarters of the items cited in our admittedly selective list have appeared in the last ten years. These works have considerably expanded our knowledge and raised significant questions for further research.

The existing literature has led us to formulate several hypotheses. First, the working class should not be isolated from international and domestic economic, social, or political systems. Second, clearly identifiable stages emerge in the development of labor and the working class; these do not necessarily match those traditionally postulated for other social groups or political institutions.

Methodologically, we think that research can yield most by clarifying the dynamic interrelationship of historical patterns, socio-economic structures, and personal or group attitudes. Scholars should apply both traditional and modern techniques, and place greater reliance on primary sources. Above all, the comparative method is crucial in defining what is left to be done.

NOTES

1. We presented earlier versions of portions of this article at: Columbia University Seminar on Latin America, March 1972; Conference on Labor and Social Change in the Americas, Rutgers University, April 1973; and some of the Argentine material at the Latin American Studies Seminar, Indiana University, October 1973. We would like to thank persons at those gatherings who gave us valuable criticism. We also express our appreciation to Sigmund Diamond of Columbia University and Donald Zagoria of Hunter College, CUNY, who read and helpfully commented on an earlier draft. We would also like to thank José Acevedo, Lydia Bloom, Martha Salper, and the Political Science Department of Lehman College, for help in the production end of this article.
2. Ernesto Laclau, "Argentina: Peronism and Revolution," *Latin America Review of Books*, 1:1:117-130 (Leeds, England) is an excellent review of literature on Peronism.

APPENDIX I

- AIFLD: American Institute for Free Labor Development. Front Royal, Virginia.  
CGT: Confederación General del Trabajo. Argentina.  
CGT: Confederação Geral do Trabalho. Brazil.  
COB: Confederação Operária Brasileira.  
CUT: Confederación Unica de Trabajadores. Chile.  
CTCH: Confederación de Trabajadores de Chile.  
DIEESE: Departamento Intersindical de Estatística e Estudos Sócio-Econômicos. São Paulo.  
FOCH: Federación Obrera de Chile.  
FORA: Federación Obrera Regional Argentina.  
ILO: International Labor Office. Geneva.

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- NICH: Non-Intervention in Chile. Berkeley.
- PTB: Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro.
- UGT: Unión Gremial de Trabajadores. Argentina.
- URLA: Union of Radical Latinamericanists.
- USA: Unión Sindical Argentina.
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