

question at all. Nor does he attempt to evaluate change from 1500 or 1600 to the eighteenth century. How much *was* new by 1748? Clearly a massive change in demand occurs in the eighteenth century, as more and more consumer goods for ordinary people come onto the bare beginnings of a mass market. As Roche and his students have shown, what were luxuries in 1700 (mirrors, porcelain, tableware, a new suit of clothes, shoes rather than clogs, etc.) were increasingly regarded as necessities.

Sonenscher's failure to examine the general character of the market economy within which the trades' internal economy operated and by which it was unquestionably conditioned is a serious shortcoming. He simply does not address the potential counter-thesis to his argument, namely that what he is looking at is the rapid development of merchant capitalism in the trades, a systemic force that profoundly altered the lifeworlds (to use Habermasian terminology) that he so brilliantly reconstructs.

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DAVIS, CHARLES L. *Working-Class Mobilization and Political Control. Venezuela and Mexico.* The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington 1989. xii, 211 pp. \$ 22.00.

Students of Latin American societies have long speculated about the relatively passive role of the working class in the region. Most Latin American governments pursue development strategies based on capital accumulation for industrial development, which result in relatively low employment levels in the modern industrial sector and wide disparities of income. Despite these conditions, which grew worse during the 1980s, the Latin American working class has not followed the model in most European countries of turning to left-wing political movements.

The most common explanation for labour's acceptance of such economic policies is the prevalence of corporatist systems of interest group mediation. Authoritarian corporatist regimes maintain their control by excluding the working classes from political participation, while inclusionary systems such as Venezuela and Mexico rely on labour's support for the hegemonic parties.

While the theoretical bases of corporatism were developed in the 1970s, empirical tests of the model applied to labour have been limited to case studies and analyses of labour policy. This book tests several propositions that emerge from the theory of corporatism by using survey research. In addition, there has been little empirical work on a comparative basis. Venezuela and Mexico are examples of different degrees of competition within inclusionary corporatist polities. Venezuelan politics features the alternation in power of two rather conservative parties, while Mexico was essentially a one-party state when this research was done.

The author's fundamental question is how the dominant political parties in Venezuela and Mexico have maintained working-class electoral support, despite generally regressive economic policies. Corporatist theory holds that pro-government parties secure labour's allegiance through bargains negotiated with unions

(and their leaders) giving these groups rewards superior to those available to peasants or unorganized urban dwellers. Not all unions are willing to subordinate their interests to government policies. Some seek to operate independently of official controls. Thus, it is possible to measure the political attitudes and behaviours of workers in incorporated unions and unincorporated unions, as well as unorganized workers. In addition, the history of labour relations in Latin America indicates that union members in strategic industries have been able to extract more favourable treatment from governments than union members in less important industrial sectors, raising the possibility that labour in strategic industries will be more supportive of the political system than workers in others sectors. Finally, the degree of competition in the political system may affect workers' political views.

The data for this study were collected in 1979–1980 through interviews with Venezuelan and Mexican members of incorporated and autonomous unions in strategic and nonstrategic unions, plus a group of nonunion workers. In addition, leaders of unions in each of the four categories were interviewed.

Analysis of the survey data revealed that the low levels of working-class electoral support for leftist political parties were accurate reflections of workers' views in the two countries, especially when compared with France and Italy. A more significant finding was that these workers were politically sophisticated and displayed high degrees of *concientización*, without being at all interested in political affairs.

When he examined the influence of union membership according to the type of union and the sector in which members were employed on political attitudes, the author basically found that these variables had little impact. Unions membership did not affect *concientización*. Contrary to corporatist theory, membership in incorporated unions was not associated with support for the parties in power, and autonomous groups were not sources of dissidence. The degree of partisan competition was much more important in the shaping of working-class political attitudes.

Similarly, the dominant political parties in the two countries guide political mobilization, not self-direction by the workers. Mexican unions, in particular, were ineffectual in mobilizing voters, though their Venezuelan counterparts were more successful, presumably because competition between the two leading political parties was reflected in the unions' internal politics. On the other hand, this explains the structural weaknesses of the left-wing parties in Venezuela and Mexico, not working-class conservatism or social mobility. Incorporated unions do not generate votes for the dominant parties. Nor do autonomous unions produce support for the left.

Prof. Davis successfully challenges many elements of the corporatist theory in this book. Clearly, the role of labour organizations in mobilizing support for hegemonic parties in Latin America should be re-examined. While the data sample is not large, it is analyzed with sophistication, and the results of the numerous regression analyses are strikingly similar. The conclusions do present problems, however. Left-wing political parties are weak because workers do not support them, while workers do not support these parties because they have little chance of success. Prof. Davis does not suggest how to address this tautology.

The premise of the book is that the political systems of Continental Europe, in particular France and Italy, are the logical models for Latin America. The implications of this assumption are not examined. For instance, one might also compare

politics in Venezuela and Mexico with other Latin American countries, such as Chile, where the left was able to mobilize the working class, or Japan, where industrialization was achieved without strong left-wing influences among the working class. Finally, the book does not prepare the reader for the strong performance of the left in the 1988 Mexican election.

The history of labour and the left in the two countries was not discussed. In Mexico, the Revolution of 1910 initially empowered both labour and the peasant class, thereby undercutting the position of the left with both groups. However, political elites quickly captured both groups for their own ends, and when left-wing parties emerged, they were subservient to foreign ideologies and disunited. In Venezuela, the immense wealth of the oil fields generated rapid economic growth and expectations of higher incomes for all workers, again undermining the appeal of the left. For all of their faults, the economic policies of these two countries produced substantial improvements for most workers in a climate of political stability during the adult lives of most workers surveyed. Other research has shown that Latin American unions frequently have objectives limited to economic gains in the workplace, findings which this study reinforces but does not acknowledge. In light of developments in Europe in 1989–1990, perhaps Latin American workers were more astute than foreign scholars thought.

This really is a book for specialists. The political systems of the two countries are not discussed. “*Concientización*” is not defined. There is only a brief explanation of the corporatist control mechanisms for labour and little background on the notion of strategic industries. For both countries, the strategic sector chosen was petroleum. In most nations, including Venezuela and Mexico, oil workers occupy special places of privilege, so conclusions based on other strategic sectors would have been more compelling. None of these criticisms is crucial to the book, but such omissions will limit its audience. On balance, Prof. Davis has produced an important study of labour in Latin America, one that deserves to be considered carefully by future scholars who consider the political role of workers in the region.

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HIRSON, BARUCH. *Yours for the Union. Class and Community Struggles in South Africa, 1930–1947*. Zed Books Ltd, London, Atlantic Highlands; Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg 1990. xiv, 230 pp. Ill. £ 32.95. (Paper: £ 9.95.); \$ 55.00. (Paper: \$ 17.50.)

In the years between the depression of 1929–1932 and the electoral victory of the National Party in 1948, South Africa witnessed an unprecedented upsurge in trade-union organisation and activity among African workers. In the 1920s the emergence of Clements Kadalie’s Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union (ICU) had caused great enthusiasm among black workers and peasants all over South Africa, but the movement had faded away under the combined pressures of repression, internal dissension and mismanagement and only some local “Independent” ICU branches survived into the early 1930s. In the late 1920s, communist