Science in the News

U.S. Assistance to Latin America: Politics, Rather than Technology, Determines What Is Most Useful

Within the State Department the feeling has been growing steadily that the question of what are the most useful types of economic and technical and educational aid the United States can grant to the Latin American countries is essentially political. The immediate problem, in this view, is not what can be done to help the long-range plans for industrializing these countries, the only ultimate answer to the poverty of the masses of the people, but what can be done to strengthen the position of governments that would like to go through with long-range development plans through democratic rather than totalitarian means. Political realities have led to an increasing belief in the importance of aiding Latin-American governments to put through elementary programs of social reform as opposed to strengthening the technology and higher education which are really more pertinent in the long run.

The political situation in Latin America that forces this conclusion is outlined below. Once the conclusion has been reached there is the further political problem of making it effective; for it is not hard at all to get Congress to vote for military aid to a Latin American dictator who promises to keep the communists out; it is not too hard to get Congress to vote for advanced technical assistance where it is easy to demonstrate how such investments will pay off in the future; the most difficult thing to do is to get Congress to go along with a program that is aimed primarily at such things as building houses for Peruvian peasants and teaching adult illiterates how to read enough to get through a tabloid newspaper.

The Political Problem

The communists and procommunists who are so easy to run across in Havana these days are glowing with confidence that Castroism will sweep over Latin America in the next few years, and although their confidence is greater than it ought to be, its basis is easy to understand.

Their belief is that in all of these countries there exists a conservative ruling class supported by foreign investors interested only in a stable government that will allow them to run their businesses without interference; that the existence of these forces, combined with a tradition of revolution, tends to lead to a rightist coup, overthrowing any liberal regime that tries to put through a real program of reform.

The communists, and a disturbingly large number of noncommunists, are convinced that the only choice for progressive interests is to follow the example of Russia, turning to a dictatorship of the left, which, whatever may be said against it, has demonstrated that at a price it can industrialize and modernize a nation.

Perfect illustrations of the problem are available in Cuba and San Salvador. The situation has led, in Cuba, to the formation of a government which insists, through Castro, that the mass of the Cuban people and the revolutionary government are the same thing, that it is impossible to attack the government without damaging the Cuban people, and that therefore anyone who opposes the government is a traitor to the Cuban people and must be stifled by the government in the name of the people's revolution.

The mass of the Cuban people readily accept this argument, for they look at what Castro has done for them and compare it with what Batista did to them and it seems, even to a great many of the more sophisticated Cubans, that Fidel Castro is doing only what the mass of the Cuban people want done and that it is indeed impossible to oppose him without damaging the interests of the Cuban people. As a result, and despite mounting indications that his regime, like that of Russia, will require a long period of austerity and repression in order to industrialize the nation, his popular support remains so strong that a successful counterrevolution is unthinkable at this time.

In contrast to this, a government in San Salvador which attempted to begin a program of liberal reform was toppled this month by a combination of the extreme right, which wanted no reform, and the extreme left, which assumes, quite correctly, that the way to a Castro-type revolution is to make sure that a middle-of-the-road government fails.

The hope for democratic reform in South America, it is generally agreed, lies in the increasing recognition of the nature of the problem within the U.S. Department of State and, more slowly, elsewhere within the American government and within the ruling oligarchies of the South American countries.

The Act of Bogota, signed last September by 21 Latin-American nations, and for which Under-Secretary of State Douglas Dillon, Kennedy's appointee as Secretary of the Treasury, deserves a great share of the credit, amounts to recognition that elementary social reforms that will win for a government the broad support of the people must take precedence over the technological and advanced educational programs that will eventually be needed to modernize these countries.

A real program of development necessarily requires, for one thing, a drastic rise in tax rates, which in every Latin-American country are now far below those in any of the more developed countries. As Castro has demonstrated, a government with really strong popular support can actually confiscate the property of the wealthier classes, while a government without such popular support cannot even begin to raise taxes, or even try to collect taxes that are already on the books, without being overthrown.

The sort of reforms the Act of Bogota recognizes as necessary "to meet the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the Americas for a better life" are very much the sort of thing that won Castro the support that has enabled him to insist that anyone who questions what he is doing is a traitor and that has given the Castro government the power to take complete con-

trol of everything it chooses to control in Cuba, and in the case of land, housing, and the larger businesses actual, if not apparent, ownership of these sectors of the economy. (Some large businesses are merely "intervened," meaning that their operation is in the hands of the government, but that they are still, in a technical sense, privately owned; many of the field workers have been given certificates of title to a few acres, but the government keeps the right to tell them what to plant, how to grow it, and where to market it, and they have no way either to sell the land they "own" or to buy more. In the case of all rented housing, payments to the government are considered payments toward ownership of the home, but even with the oldest homes it will be 5 years before anyone will know what rights, if any, ownership involves.)

Castro has had no serious trouble putting through such programs. His support in fighting Batista came largely from the very people in the middle and upper classes who now feel betrayed by the revolution. But as he prepared to move against his original supporters he won mass support by demonstrating that his government was something entirely different from anything they had ever known, or even realized was possible; a government that really intended to do something for the common people: he began replacing the mud huts of the field workers with real homes; he built schools where there had never been schools; he opened the beaches to a people that had always accepted the idea that the right to spend a day at a pleasant beach was a privilege available only to the wealthy; he built pleasant parks for people who never knew such things existed. With such accomplishments he won the absolute confidence of enough of the mass of the people to give him a free hand to do whatever else he cared to do.

The Act of Bogota talks of very much the same sort of things: schools, literacy campaigns, low-cost housing, roads in the country districts to make it easier for the small farmer to bring his produce to market. None of these things, any more than any of Castro's original reforms, contributes much to real economic development, but a government that has done such things can win the mass support to put through, if it wants to, both more social reforms and tax and other policies to speed economic development.

This set of political realities in Latin America implies that American aid, for the present, ought to be directed not toward helping these countries industrialize, but first toward winning mass support for a progressive government before a revolution of the extreme left does so. Castro was able to move without being toppled at the start because of his prestige as the hero of the revolution and his really remarkable gifts as a mass orator. The new United States policy toward Latin America, not yet put into effect, but with its intentions embodied in the terms of the $500 million fund put through Congress last summer, is to give democratic governments in Latin America a chance to win mass support without being toppled at the beginning. The method is simply to finance the first steps of reform almost entirely from the United States, making it unnecessary to begin doing things that attack the position and wealth of the oligarchy until mass support has been won.

The terms used here are a good deal blunter than anything the State Department will use officially. Compared with what the communists think is necessary, it is very mild. But compared with what conservatives, either in the United States or in South America, would like this country to do, it is literally revolutionary; it is consciously aimed at undermining the power of the established ruling classes, as well as that of long-established American business interests. But as Senator Kennedy keeps saying, we live in a revolutionary world; the only question in the underdeveloped countries is whose revolution will win, ours or the communists'.

Opposition Certain

The opposition to be expected will come first, of course, from the established oligarchies, who are at least partially aware that once a program of social reform is begun it will win for the government mass support that threatens their own position. The arguments used against beginning any such reforms are two fairly contradictory ones: the argument familiar in the United States during the 1930's that any program of social reform is a step toward communism, and the argument that the people really are not interested in such reforms. Even in Cuba today, where one need only look around him to see how much support such social reforms have won for Castro, it is still fairly easy to find upper class Cubans and old-school Western diplomats who insist that the Cuban field worker really preferred his mud hut to the houses the government is building for him.

Both of these arguments are used to oppose, in many countries, any real programs of reform even when the United States government is willing to finance them.

The situation in Cuba is helping to get across the idea that the only real choice is between a peaceful New Deal type of revolution and a violent upheaval. The State Department has instructed American ambassadors in Latin America to be as forceful as possible in getting across the idea that, if democratic forces are not permitted to gain mass support, a Castro will; yet no matter how unassailable the logic that leads to this position, a great many people satisfied with things as they are find it much easier, much more agreeable, simply to close their eyes and pretend that tomorrow will never come.

Meanwhile there is the political problem within the United States where there is unfortunately more truth than we normally like to admit to Castro's charges that American policy in Latin America has been determined not by what the American people would like to see done but by what American corporations with investments in Latin America would like to see done. The problem has been that until quite recently about the only people who were making a major effort in influencing Latin American policy were corporations with large foreign investments. Many of the companies that have recently moved into Latin America are quite liberal in their attitudes, but the old, well-established investors share the same point of view as the conservative Latin American oligarchies, and it is these older companies that enjoy a long-established connection with key Congressional chairmen and the old-school element in the foreign service.

The influence of these forces was illustrated in the complete failure of Eisenhower's attempt, during the rump session of Congress, to get authority to cut the Dominican Republic sugar quota. The biggest headlines produced by this attempt to demonstrate that the United States is opposed to dictatorships of the right as well as to those of the left were those based on Senator Ellender's remark that he thought that it would be a good thing to have a Trujillo in every country in Latin

America. Ellender is chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, which has authority over sugar legislation.

The task of overcoming these entrenched political forces will fall on Kennedy. For it is only the President who commands the position and prestige to quickly mobilize general support for policies in an area where entrenched special, rather than national, interests have long held a controlling influence. —H.M.

News Notes

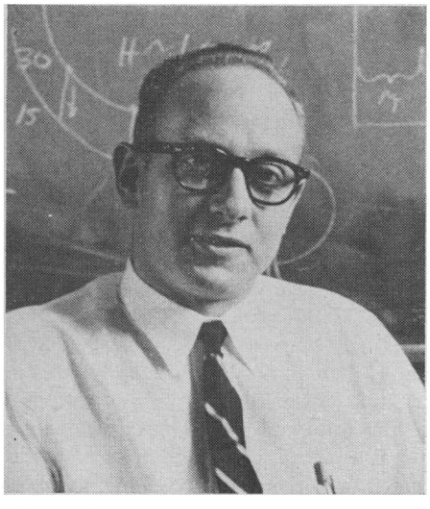
Four Major AAAS Awards Presented at Association's New York Meeting

The American Association for the Advancement of Science presented four major awards during its 127th annual meeting this week in New York.

Newcomb Cleveland Prize

Edward Anders, associate professor of chemistry at the University of Chicago, is the 32nd recipient of the $1000 AAAS Newcomb Cleveland Prize, the Association's senior award, given for "a noteworthy paper, representing an outstanding contribution to science." Anders's prize-winning work, which established a new and direct link between meteorites and asteroids, was selected from the papers delivered at last year's AAAS meeting in Chicago.

Anders, a native of Libau, Latvia, came to the United States in 1949 after 3 years of study at the University of Munich. He holds a master's and a doctor's degree in chemistry from Columbia University. He became a United States citizen in 1955.



Edward Anders, Newcomb Cleveland Prize

Anders conducted research at Brookhaven National Laboratory in 1954 and was an instructor in chemistry at the University of Illinois from 1954 to 1955. He joined the faculty of the University of Chicago as an assistant professor of chemistry in the Enrico Fermi Institute in 1955 and was appointed associate professor in 1960. Last spring he was visiting professor of geochemistry at the California Institute of Technology. He is also a consultant to the theoretical division of the Goddard Space Flight Center of the National Aeronautics and Space Adminstration.

Anders began his research activities in the field of radiochemistry. After spending nearly 6 years on an unsuccessful search for the 43rd element, technetium, in nature, he shifted his interest to cosmochemistry, particularly meteorites. Support for his work has come from the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and the National Science Foundation.

Upon receiving the award on Monday at New York's Commodore Hotel, Anders delivered an address on recent work on meteorites, in a general symposium on "Moving Frontiers of Science."

The Newcomb Cleveland Prize has been administered by the Association since 1923, when it was established by the late Newcomb Cleveland of New York. A life member of the Association, he preferred to remain anonymous until his death in 1951. With his bequest of $25,000, the AAAS continues to make the award in his name.

Theobald Smith Award

Richard J. Havel, associate professor of medicine and staff member of the Cardiovascular Research Institute, University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco, has won the 1960 AAAS Theobald Smith Award in Medical Sciences for his work in intermediary and lipoprotein metabolism. The $1000 award, which was established in 1936 by Eli Lilly and Company, is given to an investigator under 35 who has "demonstrated research in the field of medical sciences, taking into consideration independence of thought and originality."

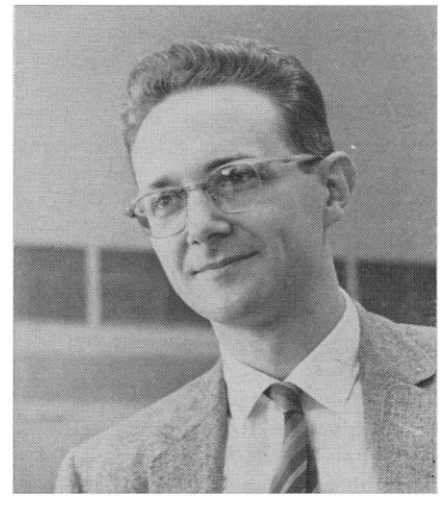
Havel graduated from Reed College and received M.S. and M.D. degrees from the University of Oregon. He then spent 4 years as intern and resident at New York Hospital. After serving as instructor in medicine at Cornell University Medical College, and then as clinical associate at the National Heart Institute, he assumed his present post in California.

Havel's early work was concerned with ways of producing heparin-like activity in serum, and with the structural requirements for heparin-like activity. Later studies were devoted to the effects of fat ingestion, of fasting, and of carbohydrate ingestion on lipids and lipoproteins of human serum. Havel's most recent experiments have led to his proposal of the concept that the sympathetic nervous system exerts a controlling action on the mobilization of fatty acids from adipose tissue which may be altered by central stimuli as well as by hormonal factors.

Havel's investigations have had significance for the field of atherosclerosis and heart disease. The American Heart Association awarded him an Established Investigatorship for his early work.

Campbell Award

M. E. Gallegly, Jr., professor of plant pathology at West Virginia University, has won the $1500 AAAS Campbell Award for Vegetable Research, which was established 3 years ago by the Campbell Soup Company to recognize research of either fundamental or practical significance to the production of vegetables for processing purposes. Gallegly was honored for his work on late blight in tomatoes and potatoes, which has made it possible to breed resistant strains. His contributions, made in cooperation with his associates (especially the staff members of the Rockefeller Foundation in Mexico), have been fundamental to a better understanding of the interaction of the



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