

Book Reviews

Social Change in Latin America Today.

Richard Adams, John P. Gillin, Allan R. Holmberg, Oscar Lewis, Richard W. Patch, and Charles Wagley. Published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Harper, New York, 1961. 353 pp. \$5.

This book, by six of our best anthropologists, is addressed to all who have a hand in our foreign affairs; perhaps that means all of us. The particular subject—Latin America and why it gives trouble to its well-meaning neighbor to the North—needs attention; so does the more general answer.

Anthropologists are trained to the reverse view—how does what *we* are, and what *we* do, look to “them”? The facts may not be very helpful; if the only way that *A* can behave to *B* is perceived by the first as altruistic and by the second as exploitative, disillusioning *A* may help neither *A* nor *B*, but is it not better to know these facts? In any case anthropologists prefer, pursue, and try to expound reality, whether or not it leads to useful application.

This book includes excellent analyses of what goes on in Peru (Allan R. Holmberg), Bolivia (Richard W. Patch), Brazil (Charles Wagley), Guatemala (Richard N. Adams), and Mexico (Oscar Lewis, whose chapter shows the remarkable progress “Since Cárdenas”). Every case is different but all share a strong urge for a better life, perhaps meaning—and this is important—North American things without North American values. The sleep of the long colonial era is shaken from the eyes at least of the middle class just emerging. If history is written later, it will say that, for these countries, the 19th century saw political independence without social change, the 20th a social and economic revolution, beginning in Mexico in the 1930's. Those who had and held and kept their share

from the populace were overturned; and their colleagues to the North became the proper scapegoat for unresolved problems and a means to unite the heterogeneous nation. They wound up as socialist republics, not because of ideological predisposition but because central state control was the old tradition. In the light of this long-term perspective, what do the anthropologists suggest for 1961?

John P. Gillin's introductory article, “Some signposts for policy,” says most here. Gillin, with long experience in all sections of the continent, in both research and government, is father of a conception of a “middle” Latin American culture; and now he describes the “middle mass.” Some of his recommendations are politically neutral—better coordination of U.S. government agencies and of the efforts of private business and public agencies operating in Latin America; establishment of a research center here; and the like. Others tell us to take sides in the social struggle, to establish personal relations with the leaders of the “middle group” and to support the new leadership against dictators. Still others seem neutral; they suggest that in our programs to help Latin Americans modernize we should honor their own intelligence, traditions, and the like, but imply that we must help Latin American nations establish programs which we think of as “socialist.”

Nothing in the particular studies contradicts these conclusions, though Patch and Holmberg suggest that the critical factor in Bolivia (which has had a social revolution) and Peru (which has not) is small-scale community development of Indian villages, while Wagley for Brazil stresses large-scale town and city solutions.

For all its richness of data, ideas, and understanding, the book has a major weakness. The authors held six discussion meetings led by the late

Lyman Bryson, who wrote an introduction; yet nowhere is there an attempt at synthesis or comparison. It would be particularly interesting to understand the relative, and striking, success of Mexico, which has become a developed nation without outside aid programs; and a comparison of Mexico and Bolivia, which have experienced social revolution, and their respective neighbors, Guatemala and Peru, would be illuminating. Anthropologists like holistic descriptions of cultures and nations, each in its own terms: but like others, anthropology is first of all a comparative science, which appears in this book to have been forgotten.

SOL TAX

*Department of Anthropology,
University of Chicago*

Becoming More Civilized. A psychological exploration. Leonard W. Doob. Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 1960. xii + 333 pp. \$6.

This is a grave, warm, and ambitious book about an important set of problems relating to the very rapidly changing statuses of most of the peoples of the world. The term “civilized” refers to the industrial complex of the West (ethnocentrically excluding Japan). The author's problem is to construct likely hypotheses and, where possible, either to test them or to provide some kind of background argument for their validity, concerning differences among the “unchanged,” the “changing,” and the “changed.” He draws on a mixed bag of materials and does not articulately recognize the differences in level among them. These are his own test materials on exigent samples in Jamaica and in three parts of Africa; test materials used by some anthropologists and psychologists working with other less civilized peoples, principally American Indian; summary statements about the nature of cultural change, in general and in reference to some particular tribes; his own informal and uncoded experiences in Africa and Jamaica (in which he shows perceptive appreciation of cultural detail), and a certain very meager amount of psychological theory.

The results are equally heterogeneous. His criticism of the adequacy of any tests, his own and those he quotes, shows the expectable high ability of a