
James Petras has written a very important book. His aim is rather ambitious; the exposition and explanation of a "new Marxist social science which is both rigorous and committed, capable of systematizing and preparing for revolutionary change" (p. 11). Although he is concerned with socialist revolutions in the Third World, the majority of the examples and cases are drawn from Latin America. There are specific chapters concerned with Chile, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and Cuba. The book is well organized and, for anyone with a basic understanding of Marxist terms, quite readable. Petras presents the reader with a consistent analysis of the relationship between the acceleration of capitalist accumulation on a world scale and the intensification of the exploitation of the working class. The book will obviously not be popular with those who still see development as the solution to Latin America's problems. Though much of Petras' material is not new, his grasp of the contemporary Latin American reality coupled with his command of radical political analysis makes for an interesting and useful study. It is not possible to do justice to Petras' thesis in such a few words; suffice it to say that the book should be required reading for anyone seriously concerned with social change in Latin America.

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This book adds important dimensions to substance offered in earlier works on the movement for a Central American Common Market. The central theme here is that shortcomings which impede successful regional integration derive more particularly from the domestic politics of the countries involved than from insufficiencies in economic or regional integration theory.

In terms of his central theme, the author (1) reassesses the standard interpretation of the role of the technocrats in the integration process, contending that the domestic political elites played an important role throughout; (2) undertakes to show that economic integration is not always a force for conciliation between countries; and (3) reflects on the proposition that integration programs necessarily assist in political and social change, pointing up that political elites can use the regional format to bypass internal economic reforms essential for national development.

The book consists of eight well organized chapters that carry the reader from the origins of the movement for a Central American Common Market through an examination of its goals, the nature of the forces exerted by participant groups, and the major turning points and crises events encountered, ending with a chapter of conclusions that brings major factors and issues into sharp focus.

In the opinion of this reviewer, the present book comprises a valuable contribution to the growing literature on the Central American Common Market.