

Dependent Development

THE ALLIANCE OF
MULTINATIONAL, STATE,
AND LOCAL CAPITAL
IN BRAZIL

BY PETER EVANS



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*Aos Brasileiros que recusaram
largar a visão de uma sociedade justa,
livre, e igualitária*

Foreword

ONE who agrees to write a foreword often ends up with the same feeling of frustration as a young man who finds an attractive dancing partner just as the music is ending. What is there to say after everything has been said? Strictly speaking, if the writer of a foreword answers this question in all modesty, he is left with nothing to say. The author and the book speak for themselves. That is what has happened in this case.

I read the manuscript during the first half of 1977 before the preparation of the final version. I had met the author the year before at a lecture I gave in New York. We were able to develop our relations further thanks to a visit on his part to Yale and an opportunity on my part to give a talk at Brown University. From the beginning, he seemed to me an unlikely character, as if he had come out of one of those old Gary Cooper films, one of those individuals who embodies the "basic (or archetypal) North American." Only rarely can a person of this type be found in the day-to-day life of the United States of "mass society" and the megalopolis. On reading his manuscript I discovered that he belonged to the tradition of critical thinking which has Veblen and C. Wright Mills among its exponents but is little cultivated in North American universities. So, it is not hard to see that I liked both the author and the book—and that I consider this foreword superfluous.

I am not going to dwell on the obvious. First, the vast bibliography which the author uses as a point of departure in the formulation of his theoretical syntheses. Second, the rich documentation which he puts forward and uses, as a rule, honestly and meticulously. Without indulging in mindless and unnecessary quantification, he demonstrates quantitatively certain characteristics and tendencies basic to the incorporation of Brazil into

the system of monopoly capitalism. Third, the extent to which he moves forward along a creative and original path within political economy, and the extent to which he enriches the theoretical contribution of Paul Baran, his principal interlocutor (visible or invisible). Fourth, his love of clarity and thorough exposition, which creates, here and there, a few excesses (the author does not allow himself overly selective quotations, incomplete descriptions, or partial explanations, and this creates a false impression of prolixity). In the end, the scholar is always a scholar: conservative, liberal, or radical, he loves learning and works in its service. The prevalence of the spirit of erudition is not a defect: it is well counterbalanced by a severely critical attitude that is exemplary, and a sense of militancy in relation to the world.

In my opinion, what makes this book stand out, making it a striking contribution to modern sociological research, is the way in which it returns to the theory of imperialism, its method of considering the Brazilian case, and its interpretative approach. These three things enable one to place the book both in terms of the theoretical advance it has achieved and in terms of its significance for social scientists, for the socialist movement, and for understanding the current epoch.

One may feel that certain authors were neglected, especially Bukharin (whose *Economic Theory of the Period of the Transition* seems to me to be the most important sourcebook for scholars of dependency) and Luxemburg (whose interpretation of the dynamics of the economies of the center in relation to the transformation, exploitation, and shaping of peripheral capitalist economies is still far from having been adequately reevaluated). Nevertheless, the effort made to give precedence to the theory of imperialism is constructive and useful in an academic environment that has shown itself so timid up to now in making use of analyses of capitalism that depart from a conservative orbit. It is particularly important to reject decisively what has been done to the so-called "theory of dependency" in the United States. It has been vulgarized, sanitized, and sterilized. Evans corrects this

error and moves in the right direction by associating the analysis of dependency with the general theory of imperialism. I do have a small point of disagreement since I do not think that there is such a thing as the *theory of dependency*; what exists is a theory of imperialism of which the body of hypothesis and explanations relating to the effects of imperialist domination on the periphery of the capitalist world form one part. But this does not prevent me from being enthusiastic about his approach, which locates imperialism at the center of the theory and focuses on relations of dependency as seen in the light of the dynamics of expansion of large corporations, the modern capitalist state, and the model for control of the periphery formed by the two of them in an era when the "division of the world" has been redefined by internationalization and worldwide counterrevolution.

The Brazilian case has been grasped, as Marx would say, with a view toward understanding the "unity in diversity." It is for this reason that Evans gives so much attention to the investigations, analyses, and discoveries of his Brazilian and Latin American colleagues (as well as other authors who have been concerned with the analysis of capitalism emphasizing the center-periphery dialectic). Unlike those "Brazilianists" who neglect the ideas of Brazilians and other Latin Americans, Evans not only begins with them, but critiques and elaborates them. He also tries to enrich them, bringing forward possibilities of theoretical syntheses and supplementary interpretation based on investigations of capitalism in the hegemonic countries of the center (in particular, the U.S.A. and the complex of power relations engendered by the final confrontation with socialism). Consequently, his approach is extremely rich and conveys the multiplicity of relationships that connect his empirical data to the reality of which they are a part. It is not just that it goes beyond the false dichotomy of center-periphery (something which had already been achieved by Brazilian and Latin American scholars); in superseding this dichotomy it provides a global context for the apprehension and refinement of the theory, the context of the totality of the con-

temporary capitalist system and the importance of the periphery *within* this system and *for* it. This leaves, of course, room for a theoretical understanding of what dependent capitalist development, "national" or "local" bourgeoisies of the periphery itself, and their openly dictatorial states all mean to the equilibrium of the world capitalist system and the coexistence of capitalism and socialism (in this difficult and tormented phase of human history). What can be seen is not only the "imperialization of Brazil," "dependent modernization" as an historical reality, or the dead end of the delayed bourgeois revolution. What can be seen is what Brazil signifies for the empirical, theoretical, and critical understanding, not only of dependent capitalism and associated peripheral development, but also, and principally, for the revolution which the periphery imposes on the capitalist nations of the center and on the world capitalist system of power. In short, the history of capitalism, in our times, reveals itself more clearly in the *periphery* than in the *center*. Brazil's present not only illuminates the future of other nations of the periphery, it reflects what capitalism and imperialism are doing to "modern Western civilization" and to humanity. "Bourgeois democracy" is rapidly becoming obsolete and its evolution, which is most obvious in extreme cases like the Brazilian one, constitutes the real movement of history in the whole capitalist world (in spite of some rhetoric with regard to "human rights").

The question of the interpretive orientation implicit in the foregoing discussion is too complex to be discussed in a foreword. I would suggest, however, that we should return to the classics of revolutionary socialism, which were not afraid to rely on diverse sources of knowledge. In fact, they "squeezed dry" their sources, worrying more about eliminating the ideological infusions contained in political economy, for example, than in excluding positive contributions that were partially or essentially valid. The prejudice which subsequently became implanted in the "socialist academic environment" severely impoverished those "engaged" or "radical" analyses which avoided the pitfalls and limitations of

the practitioners of supposed "ethical neutrality." Thus, in the name of an orthodoxy poorly understood and poorly practiced socialists turned to writing catechisms or constructing sterile dogmatism, banishing the creative imagination from the orbit of socialist social science. Evans escapes this deformed intellectual leftism, which is truly an infantile beginner's disorder. One may regret the lack of emphasis on the direct analysis of class relations and class conflict, or on the fundamental contradictions of contemporary monopoly capitalism (which include the pressures created by the growth of the socialist sphere on central and peripheral capitalist countries and on the world capitalist system of power). But, this is an almost inevitable flaw. One cannot do everything, and even Evans's Latin American colleagues have had to operate to varying degrees within such limitations. What matters is the general significance of the interpretative orientation. It is an orientation that indicates there is a movement underway in the United States from an abstract radicalism to a new type of Marxism. This transition is very important for those who complain about the political isolation of the American university and the lack of more direct influence from the working class movement on the pattern of intellectual work among North American social scientists.

The value of a book does not guarantee that it will have an effect. By the same token, the significance of an author's position does not insure he will be accepted or that his importance will be recognized. We operate in the sphere of potentiality. Nonetheless, the potential justifies some optimism and certain hopes. We can hope that the author and his book will enjoy a balanced and constructive reception, and that both lay readers and specialists will benefit from the insights into the complex world historical situation of the final quarter of the twentieth century that the book has to offer.

FLORESTAN FERNANDES
São Paulo, January 6, 1978

Acknowledgments

BOOKS are never written by individuals. The work and thinking of an extraordinarily large number of people have gone into producing the chapters that follow. A few are acknowledged briefly in the footnotes, but most are not. In some ways, it would be fairer to leave them unacknowledged since they had no say in the final shape of the product. But, without trying to shift any of the responsibility for the outcome, which is mine alone, some of the contributors need mentioning.

Among the most important contributors, but least responsible for the book itself, are the business executives of various nationalities. Without their generosity in sharing their time this study would not have been possible. I doubt they will be happy with the result, but I hope that it bears enough resemblance to reality to provoke them to think about why they see things differently.

Since the research on which this book is based began almost ten years ago, I have also accumulated a number of debts to various funding agencies. My initial fieldwork in Brazil as a graduate student would not have been possible without the support of the National Institutes of Mental Health and the Ford Foundation. Support from the Carnegie Foundation through the Harvard Center for International Affairs gave me some valuable rethinking time after the completion of my dissertation. Funds from the Ford Foundation enabled me to return to Brazil, and a grant from the Brazil office of the Ford Foundation was essential to the completion of that period of fieldwork. The writing itself could not have been accomplished in the absence of a fellowship from the Howard Foundation.

During the time I spent in Brazil the sympathy and support

of Brazilian friends, colleagues, and students made fieldwork a pleasure and, more important from the point of view of the book, contributed immeasurably to my understanding of what was going on in Brazil. If my work has escaped some of the naive views common to North Americans, there are a large number of Brazilians who deserve the credit. While I cannot cite all of them individually, Maurício Vinhas de Queiroz must be mentioned. Our many discussions of the history of large firms, local and multinational, in Brazil were a very important part of my education and Chapter 3 is largely the product of a research project in which we collaborated. At a much later stage, conversations with Florestan Fernandes were important in stimulating me to re-think my theoretical approach to Brazilian politics. For this, for his generous foreword, and most of all for having provided an exemplar of steadfastness to principle for so many years, I would like to thank him.

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and Tinker Foundations, has been one of the most important intellectual influences on my work. The members of this group not only listened to my ideas and helped to reshape them, but also provided me with constant stimulation and new ideas by presenting their own work. Their contribution went far beyond what is evident from my footnotes.

There were a number of other kinds of support, both generalized and practical, without which the manuscript would never have been completed. My parents taught me to examine conventionally accepted explanations for social behavior critically long before I understood the words "social" or "behavior," and they have supported my efforts in this direction ever since. Elaine Haste and Norma MacDonald both typed multiple drafts of different chapters with an efficiency that was embarrassingly superior to that of the work that proceeded theirs. Kate Dunnigan not only typed but also provided crucial general aid in the production of the final draft. Sandy Thatcher's enthusiasm, good advice, and effectiveness more than lived up to his widespread reputation as an editor of exceptional caliber. Dietrich Rueschmeyer was an ideal colleague throughout the period I worked on the manuscript, always quick to respond to my ideas, always interested in what I was doing, and always understanding when another deadline passed unmet. Louise Lamphere was not only supportive, but also provided me with a model of intellectual honesty and clear thinking; to the extent that either of these qualities is embodied in the manuscript she deserves the major credit.

A number of individuals had to put up with living in the same house with me during the writing of this book. They tolerated lapses in the performance of my domestic responsibilities and created an environment that often made me wonder how authors who lack such a community survive. I can only hope that Ed Benson, Sue Benson, Kate Dunnigan, Louise Lamphere, Barbara Melosh, Ruth Milkman, Tina Simmons, and Bruce Tucker

feel that they have gotten something close to the support for their own work that I feel I have gotten for mine.

Finally, I would like to thank my two sons, Benjamin and Alexander, for talking about superheroes with me, playing football with me, and valuing my companionship for reasons that had nothing whatsoever to do with whether I ever finished this work.

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