

RAIMUNDO SANTOS: *Caio Prado Júnior na Cultura Política Brasileira*. Rio de Janeiro: MAUAD, 2001.

Marxist thought in 20th-century Brazil has remained in consistent dialogue with historical, sociological and anthropological theories of national history and character, as well as with the organized political struggle over Brazil's present and future. The work of historian Caio Prado Júnior (1907-1990), best known for his landmark treatise: *A Formação Económica do Brasil Contemporânea* (1945), has been highly influential in both of these ongoing processes. Caio Prado's economic interpretation of history, which viewed Brazil's political, economic and racial problems as a consequence of colonial settlement patterns driven by global Euro-commerce, challenged alternative explanations by his contemporaries (notably Gilberto Freyre's celebration of Brazilian cultural hybridity due to the combined effects of miscegenation, a tropical climate and a relatively benign form of slavery). Similarly, Caio Prado's adaptation of classic Marxist theory served as a constant point of reference in the complex development of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB). Political scientist Raimundo Santos's recent biography, *Caio Prado Júnior na Cultura Política Brasileira*, delves deeply into Caio Prado's intellectual development, bringing this potent and influential thinker into dialogue with contemporary debates within the Brazilian left.

Santos sets out to chronicle a complex set of intellectual and political relationships spanning roughly four decades of *pensamento caiopradiano*. His initial chapters focus on the development of Caio Prado's analysis of Brazilian society and strategy for reform. Santos examines Caio Prado's struggle to work out the relationship between poor, rural farmers and formal political activity in the context of a post-colonial liberal-democratic order, formulated in his well-known theory of a "revolução agrária não-camponesa" without feudalism, without classic capitalism, and without a national bourgeoisie. Santos's detailed attention to Caio Prado's interaction with the PCB (especially as an ideological counterpart to the PCB's official voice, Werneck Sodré), and to his attempts to adapt orthodox Marxist concepts to Brazilian society, effectively conveys Caio Prado's status as both a product of his times and, at the same time, a "militant dissident" (18), an outsider with whose original thinking the PCB and broader intellectual left constantly had to grapple. The so-called "strange marxism" of Caio Prado Júnior, epitomized in *Esboço dos Fundamentos da Economia Política* (1957), developed out of an economic analysis that pitted Keynes against Marx (particularly in working out the centerless dynamic between internal and external markers) and a rejection both of Sodré's call for a unified front and

his contention that Brazilian colonialism had led to a form of "feudal regression" (19).

The middle chapters of Santos's book focus on Caio Prado Júnior's theory of politics, elaborated in the context of disagreements with the PCB immediately following the end of Vargas's Estado Novo in 1945, and afterwards, in the late 1950s/early 1960s. Drawing from Caio Prado's diaries, historical texts and the handful of journals and periodicals circulated by the Communist left for ideological development, Santos probes deeply into the "battle of ideas" which characterized the mid- to late-1940s. As exemplified in *Historia Económica do Brasil* (1945), Caio Prado's emergent political science reworked the (asymmetrical) relationship between the economy and society, conceptualized now in the field of politics itself (148). In the years leading up to the 1964 military coup, Caio Prado progressed to sophisticated theorization of democracy itself, something which, as Santos rightly points out, has been surprisingly neglected by leftist thinkers since the 1989 return to democratic government.

In two later chapters, Santos skillfully examines Caio Prado's influence on his disciples and other admiring interlocutors, as well as his response to the 1964 military coup. Santos focuses on Caio Prado's most notable disciple and follower, journalist Elias Chaves Neto, whose various writings, particularly in the *Revista Brasiliense*, pushed his master's vision in more militant directions and left a mark on the PCB, which, since Vargas's suicide in 1954, had been redefining itself. Also influential on the PCB was Caio Prado's *The Brazilian Revolution* (1966), which explains the 1964 coup in terms of a particular form of capitalism inlaid in the state apparatus and national political life, "recreating itself in a logic of cause and effect, forming a world without solid bases" (203-4).

Santos's analysis takes us up to Caio Prado's writings in the 1970s, particularly his critiques of the "economic miracle" and of the military regime. In the final chapter, Santos argues passionately and convincingly for Caio Prado Júnior's place in contemporary *pecebismo*, lamenting his lack of recognition to date, despite his pioneering adaptation of Marxist theory and his influential analysis of Brazilian society (310).

Caio Prado Júnior na Cultura Política Brasileira presents a detailed account of the trajectory of Caio Prado Júnior's far-reaching influence on Brazilian intellectual and political life, and at the same time expands Santos's career project: the analysis of Brazilian Communism in the 20th century. Santos takes us far beyond the usual gloss of Caio Prado—the economic interpretation of Brazilian history outlined in *A Formação Económica do Brasil Contemporânea*—providing an insightful analysis of the historian's evolving theory (particularly his innovative adaptation of orthodox Marxism

to the Brazilian reality), his interaction with institutional politics, and his multiple interlocutors and disciples. Furthermore, Santos effectively brings Caio Prado into dialogue with contemporary debates in the Brazilian left over the agrarian problem and discussions about sustainability. Though perhaps beyond the scope of Santos's endeavor, it is worth noting Caio Prado's relevance to contemporary party-based Socialism (à la the Workers' Party or PT), as well as to Brazil's vibrant social movement sector, which continues to grapple with the reconciliation of group-specific interests with a "unified front."

Raimundo Santos is of the conviction that it is impossible to understand 20th-century socio-political thought and practice without examining the cultural politics of Brazilian Communism. His book, focusing on one particularly influential Marxist historian, proves this point skillfully and convincingly.

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BARBARA STALLINGS and WILSON PERES: *Growth, Employment and Equity: The Impact of Economic Reforms in Latin America and the Caribbean.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000.

This book is the result of years of work by a large team of economists and regional specialists established at the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA). It is clearly one of the most comprehensively researched and authoritative studies done on the topic yet. To be sure, it is much too early to give any sort of definitive assessment on the reforms, but the time is ripe to sketch a preliminary picture. The study is very representative of Latin America, focusing on nine countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico, and Peru) comprising 81 percent of the region's total population and 90 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The wide gamut of Latin American reforms are generally separated into two groups: "first generation" reforms (defined by the study as import liberalization, domestic financial liberalization, capital account opening, privatization, tax reform) and "second generation" reforms (including regulation, public administration, the judiciary, education, and others). The study is concerned with the latter. Reforming the region's institutions is no less crucial, but this second wave of reforms now underway is much more challenging and will take longer to implement. The nine project countries are, in turn, divided into two groups according to whether they are aggressive or