

Aprista Party was founded in 1924 by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre (1898- ) and a group of young Peruvian intellectuals and politicians. They favored planned economy, integration of the Indian masses into the nation's economic and political life, nationalization of land and industries, and opposition to imperialism. In external affairs, they favored a close cooperation amongst the Latin American Republics to counterbalance the influence of the United States, and asked for the internationalization of the Panama Canal. Though dialectical materialism characterized Aprista ideology, the party never accepted the political or philosophical theories of Marxian communism.

Another peculiarly American philosophy, closely akin to aprismo, which gained ground between the two World Wars, was indigenismo. It was characterized by scholarly and scientific study of Latin American social problems. Attention was centered on the Indian masses, and a sociopolitical philosophy was elaborated on the assumption that Latin America's contemporary cultural history is continuous with the pre-Conquest civilization. Indigenismo appeared in the political platforms of the PRI in Mexico, APRA in Peru, and the Guatemalan revolution party under José Arévalo. Afro-American idealism, which stressed African cultural values, influenced sociopolitical thought in Brazil, Cuba, and Haiti.

Neo-Thomistic ideas appeared in Latin America in the late 1930's. Jacques Maritain's attacks on secularism appealed to Catholics, especially during and after the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39. After World War II, neo-Thomism gained more ground, as Christian Socialist parties appeared in various countries.

After 1950, because of the era of military dictatorships, liberals and Socialists became more concerned with political action than with thought. (See above, pt. II.) The recent defeats of dictatorships in Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, and Cuba, however, appear to have inaugurated a political cycle characterized by reformism combined with nationalism. Argentina and Colombia have serious economic difficulties and peculiar political conditions that inhibit social change. The philosophy of the present government of Venezuela is socialistic, but it is still too early to tell whether the ideas of President Betancourt and the Democratic Action Party can be put into practice.

Similarly, it is too early to detect with accuracy any definite political direction of the revolutionary government of Cuba. Some of the programs decreed by Castro, such as the agrarian reform, and formulated by the revolutionary groups which defeated Machado in 1933, were expressed in the constitution of 1940. The Cuban revolution of 1959, however, with its strong nationalism and revolutionary mystique, has many of the same characteristics of the mass movement of the Mexican revolution of 1910.

In the political philosophy of contemporary Latin America, statism has assumed great prominence. Thinkers and writers of both left and right strongly urge state intervention in social and economic problems. Parties that traditionally were conservative and favored the status quo are often revolutionary today—judging by U.S. standards—and advocate sweeping social and economic reforms. Latin American political thinkers are acutely aware that their area is behind in the march of civilization and are determined to catch up with it.