



## **Violence and the Latin American Revolutionaries (Foreign Policy Research Institute Book)**

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This volume departs both from approaches to revolution in Latin America that emphasize interests and those that emphasize socioeconomic and political injustice. Rather, it deals with real life, flesh and bone, revolutionary cadres: their thoughts, backgrounds, mentalities, and behavior. Going beyond clichés about Soviet encroachment in Latin America and "injustice breeds revolution," the contributors address the issue of the relationship between leaders and followers in a revolutionary context, seeing revolutionary leaders as the key to articulating and defining the agenda of the "revolution."

In contrast to most theorizing, revolutionary leaders almost invariably come from the privileged, even aristocratic classes. The findings raise the issue of how well these leaders actually represent the peoples for which they claim to speak. They also prompt questions about the democratic nature of guerrilla organizations. If the leaders are so far removed, by social background and education, personal experience and ideological articulation, from their followers, how realistic is it to see the Left as a purveyor of progress? Perhaps it is more correct, say the contributors, to see their claims as manipulative tactics directed to resolving a struggle for power among competing elites.

The selection of topics ranges from the historical development of revolutionary struggles since Che Guevara (Halperin and Ratliff) to the more specific application and motivation behind them (Ybarra-Rojas and Tismaneanu). Chapters deal with the attempt to define a typology of revolutionary leaders (Radu) and their Western supporters (Hollander). Some authors (Payne, Horowitz) combine these approaches.

Many issues examined in this volume are new, including an analysis of the gap between the internationalist outlook of the leaders and the parochial views of their followers. The violent organizations of the Left in Latin America are shown to be largely the functional result of upper- and middle-class leaders who combine an appeal to the lumpenproletariat at home with support of alienated Westerners to pursue their own elitist agenda.

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