Beatlemania to military seizure of power that it exemplified revolution exemplified of stability that the physician means that the physician has come to rival the importance of the priests and witch doctors who formerly supervised the life of the ill who had no hope for survival and could only settle their affairs with God. Increase in life span has contributed to the population growth of traditional Latin America, which has grown from 124 to 347 million persons since 1940.

As the number of persons needing service each available physician decreased from 2,800 to 1,900, the number of persons per capita in Argentina doubled—this, because of the region's growing "economic pie."

The psychological importance of increasing absolute wealth cannot be ignored. Yet, the increasing per capita wealth of most Latin American countries does not mean that the wealth is fairly distributed between individuals or regions within countries. Rather, it may mean that countries are accumulating resources needed to build national systems at least capable of better supporting populations.

If there is no widening economic gap in this hemisphere, then, does that mean that we can assume there is no widening gap in social conditions? Rather than make such an assumption, which already we have suggested to be erroneous, let us summarize data in the Health, Education, and Welfare Index (HEC Index) which includes twelve primary social indicators. Six of these indicators exemplify the dramatic social change that Latin America has undergone: life expectancy, persons per physician, literacy, enrollment of school-age population at the primary and secondary levels, and persons per motor vehicle.

Life expectancy has increased from 38 to 65 years of age since 1940. Longer life by an average of 27 years means that the 19-year-old youth no longer feels that he is half way through his span on earth.

Because longer life by a 17% increase over 1940 means that early death is no longer the dominant factor for the masses, the immediate import of religion is no longer the same. Indeed, longer life made possible by the spread of modern medicine means that the physician has come to rival the importance of the priests and witch doctors who formerly supervised the life of the ill who had no hope for survival and could only settle their affairs with God. Increase in life span has contributed to the population growth of traditional Latin America, which has grown from 124 to 347 million persons since 1940.

(Continued on page LA-49)
regularly reach large number of people except indirectly through televised religious mass, the quality of such a religious relationship with soccer matches and tele-

views—in Mexico Sunday television viewers have increasingly become addicted to professional football telecasts from the United States. Even if the Church did not face the handicap of having to work nearly twice as long for each in-

individual life span let alone for a rapidly expanding population, it would have been unable to keep pace with changes in edu-

cational patterns, especially involving literacy. Literacy in Latin America has increased from 50 to nearly 80% during the last four decades; this revolution in human capacity has been accompanied by an enrollment gain in primary school-age population from 45 to over 80%. At the same time, secondary-school-age population rose from 5 to 25%. These data affect directly or indirectly the role of the Catholic Church. The Church now faces a situation where it must begin to respond to new movements rather than attempt to lead, a fac-
tor that explains its internal shifts (however halting) from right to center on the political spectrum—some within the Church even feel that if religion is to compete with Marxism it must appeal to students and workers by adopting Marxist pre-
cepts.

Yet another HEC indicator—persons per motor vehicle—suggests that extent not only of rapidly expanding physical mobility, but of upward social mobility as well. In 1940 Latin America had 261 people per vehicle. By 1950 this figure had fallen below 30. Per capita figures do not mean that all of the regions' population share equally in this growth means of transport rather, they mean that as there are fewer people per vehicle the chance of ownership increases. More importantly, chance of access to transport in-

creases as the number of vehicles increases in relation to the population—thus it is impossible to ride a bus or hitch a ride on a truck has be-

come a common form of transport for the masses.

That there is no widening social gap between Latin America and the United States can be seen in the total HEC Index sum-

mating these and other indicators. The total HEC Index also includes infant mortality rate, persons per hospital bed, popu-

lation enrollment in college as a percent of enroll-

ment in primary schools, newspaper circulation per 1,000 persons, and number of telephones per 100 persons.

With zero on the HEC Index indicating equality with the United States (and 100—inequality) Latin America has an index rank of 74 in 1940 compared to about 60 in 1980. Clearly Latin America is headed in the direc-
tion of improving the gap between the attainment standards; how-

ough it has far to go, its position is not worsening as many obser-

vors would have us believe. True, HEC data do not in-

clude measures of income distribution, but these three factors are concerned with secondary rather than primary social change. The twelve HEC Index Indicators deal with the extent to which infrastructure has been created in human capacity, without a strong primary base in inade-

quate health, education, and communication it is not possible that this headway can be made in the important sphere especially involving income.

As Latin America changed socially during the 1950s and 1960s the first wave of consumerism involved the "plastic revolution." Seemingly all goods demanded by the middle class were to be made of plastic—flowers, furniture covers, shoes, toys, etc. With the advent of the 1970s and 1980s the middle class has increasingly gone beyond plastic culture even as the masses move to make it their own. Increasing so-

phistication about consumption sees plastic as "cheap and convenient" and in the second phase, Spanish colonists settle in the United States and Western Europe for customs and ideas, has begun to conduct research on indigenous music, as in Argentina and Colombia. With glo-

ification of folkloric music and the recording of some hit records of Indian music (as in Bolivia), Latin American idealism have made a resurgence. In this context it is easier to find dance bands in each country who play cha-cha, cumbias, sambas, merengues, mambo, bo-

lers, etc. Too, return to Latin American music in Latin Am-

rica has been enhanced by the "salsa boom" in the United States.

Yet the Latin American cultural current remains mixed. Al-

though disco music has faded in the United States, it contin-

ues to play an important role in Latin America, especially among the masses who often dance it in their own national style. As in Mexico where it takes on a distinctive form and "Saturday Night Fever" became Mexican rather than for-

gign. For elites, worship of plastic itself has shifted to wor-

ship of plastics in the form of records, the charts for which con-

tain many foreign songs in English. (Some of the sons of the elite have chosen a different form of plastic to worship—

plastic bombs to employ terror as they seek political change.)

The extent of U.S. musical penetration on and off the

charts has prompted schemes to counter "negative foreign influence," as in Nicaragua which since the Revolution of 1979 has required that the broadcasting of each U.S. popular song be matched by the broadcasting of a Latin tune. And broad-

cast control has risen in other ways. In 1977 the Argentine govern-

ment banned from television the Three Stooges, who are seen as helping to cause violence where over 6,000 persons have "disappeared," in police "detention camps." Some Latin American governments stepped in the 1960s and 1970s to control broadcast of protest songs, as has El Salvador this year.

Some observers, however, have viewed the role of popular music in Latin America as helping to prevent revolution rather than to weaken the old systems. Many urban Brazilians poor, for example, spend most of the year and much of their excess energy preparing for carnival week when the samba groups take over the cities as their own. Mexican disco contests on television offer another example as poor and middle upwardly mobile youth compete to gain attention and money.

The impact of popular Latin American popular music during the last decade has been phenomenal. Although Mexi-

can music has been important because of Mexico's strong cen-

tral industry and film exports to the region, recently the tele-

visioning of musical contests with songs broadcast via satellite (linking many Latin American countries and Spain on the same program) has pulled Latin American together in a new way. Romantic and tropical rhythms are among the most popular. The charts begin to show concensus fava-

orites from country to country. With television audiences voting by applause meters in each country as their own songs are put up against those of other countries, the cultural region of Latin American has been strengthened in a way that was unimagined only a few decades ago.

Sale of records sparked by international song contest typi-

fies the change in consumption pattern of Latin America. To play a record or a cassette requires equipment, often status to the owner. Boom in musical sales, enhanced by the transistor radio that makes songs known in the first instance, suggests that consumption is becoming more sophisticated. With Latin America's population increasingly becoming an ur-

ban one (more than half of the people now live in cities and towns) the mass media are forced to be the main sources in con-

sumption in than the politics of making coups and revolutions that can only upset consumption patterns. Thus, national support for land reform has tended to fade in the face of urban demands for low-cost food made possible not by land distribution but by concentration of holdings to be worked in large scale commercial ventures.

Old style revolutions involving land reform as a basic pre-

cept have also been called into question throughout Latin America as a result of the failure of the Cuban Revolution to resolve its economic problems—after a brief period of in-migrant labor. Half the land in the early 1960s Cuba set up state farms and is more dependent upon sugar in its relation with the USSR than it ever was in relation with the United States. Even with up to $5,000,000 of subsidy per day the USSR is having a very difficult time keeping Cuba solvent.

If many workers and intellectuals may still seek violent revo-

lution to solve national development problems, as in El Sal-

vador, the middle classes reject the revolutionary solution. Only when the middle classes have thrown their support to insur-

gent forces has political revolution been possible as in Chile and Nicaragua. In both countries the middle classes were soon disillusioned with the sudden expansion of state power at the expense of private business. For "good reason," then, the middle classes have moved to support governments that deregulate economies "to get government off the back of the people," as in Argentina and Chile where free markets and Lais-

liberal policies have been instituted and suggest models for President Reagan's plans in the United States.

Latin America's economic problems remain especially seri-

ous as its raw material export prices fall in the OPEC-caused world recession. As industrial demand slackens, do the need for raw materials. Even the oil exporting Venezuela, Bol-

ivia, Ecuador, and Mexico have been hurt by the recent "oil glut" resulting from the recession as well as oil conservation programs in all countries. Yet with its industrialization ad-

vanced, Mexico's long-term advantage as an oil producing country does not lie in export of petroleum but rather in using that "black gold" to manufacture export goods inexpensively. Recall that the rise of the United States to industrial power was financed in no small part by the mid-nineteenth century gold boom in what had been Mexico's California. The competi-
tive edge for pricing of manufacturing may in the future belong to Mexico. In the meantime innovative, upwardly mobile Mexi-

cans may not involve themselves in politics but migrate to the United States in the same tradition that twomillion Colombians may have always done, most recently from Haiti, Cuba, and El Salvador. (Poor Guatemalans migrate to Mexico and Colombians to Venezuela.)

Although from the U.S. view political and economic prob-

lems appear to dominate Latin American life, a new con-

servatism in the region seem to prefer military coups to revolu-

tion especially at the middle-class level. With much of the lower class population in each country identifying with the middle class with whom it wants to join, the idea of a "proleta-

rian identity" has been blunted—who wants to live like the poor workers in the USSR and Polish examples where laborers are doomed to remain at the bottom of society?

In short, it is generally more enticing to go disco or carniv-

al dancing—to rise in society and try to increase one's cultural consumption levels—than to follow Che Guevara's path to death in guerrilla battles. Popular music may indeed sym-

bolize the way in which consumption patterns move in the Argentinian revolutionary movements which demand austerity for all in the name of "national good" that is not much fun.