

TRIBUTE TO LATE GUDMUND STANG

Magnus Mörner

In January, 2002, our Nordic countries lost one of their pioneer Latin Americanist scholars, the Norwegian Gudmund Stang, with his brilliant mind and strong personality. He was born in Buenos Aires in 1933 by Norwegian parents. His father Einar was a fine artist who in his drawings caught the image of the River Plate countryside. Gudmund received an Anglo-Argentine education. He would remain a member of the Anglican Church until his death. He did not move to Norway until 1951 to carry out his military service. Then he started studies in primarily history at the University of Oslo until his graduation in 1962. He was especially interested in the theory and methods of history and social sciences and wrote his thesis in British historiography. At the same time he gathered an impressive knowledge and understanding of both the philosophy, literature, art and music of the Nordic countries, Britain and Latin America. When an Assistant Professor in History at the University of Minnesota 1967-1969, this part of the world became his favourite field of studies.

In 1972, he joined the teaching staff of the University of Trondheim as a lecturer in social history, that of Norway as well as that of Britain and Latin America. His problem was always to obtain a reasonable share for the latter. Meanwhile, from 1970 onwards, the interest in Nordic collaboration in the field of Latin American studies got an expression in NOSALF to begin with a committee in 1973 an association. In both Gudmund played an important role. At the same time, he also joined AHILA, the Association of European Latin Americanist historians that was being formed. In this way, particularly, the two of us became close collaborators and friends. To a considerable extent his scholarly production is related to the agenda of these two networks.

Gudmund's article on Scandinavian emigration to Latin America 1800-1940 was one of the best contributions to the big AHILA conference on emigration in Cologne in 1975. It was of great comparative value both in a Scandinavian and a general European context. He also had the excellent idea of focussing on one professional group for special treatment because of its particular developmental value, that of immigrated European engineers. As shown by a short article in a "Festschrift" in 1997, Stang

continued to work on this topic, but a 40 pp. version is buried in a Dragvoll paper from 1989.

At another AHILA meeting in Warsaw in 1980 on the images held of Latin America in Europe, Stang presented another item of considerable comparative value, based on Norwegian educational texts over time. A year later, AHILA met in Stockholm to discuss European capitals, entrepreneurs and workers in Latin America. This was very much in line with Stang's main interests. His paper on the personnel strategy of British firms in Latin America 1880-1930 was a very substantial, indeed, path-breaking contribution. In the course of the 1980's he continued to work on different aspects of Latin American industrialization (see bibliography 1986 and 1993).

Although Gudmund Stang tried, as a lecturer and writer, to cover the evolution of the Atlantic world from Columbus onwards, he never lost sight of contemporary events. With Stang's rather complex background, the 1982 British-Argentine war was a real tragedy and he attacked the Norwegian government for its pro-British stand. Still two informative publications, which he wrote in 1983 and 1989, were notably objective and help to explain the Argentine collapse today. From his days in student politics on the conservative side, Gudmund, with his great wit, enjoyed debate and did not shun drastic formulations. In the age of romantic and loose revolutionary leftism, linked to "che" and others, he was formidable as an adversary. He was also a charming, unorthodox lecturer and teacher who took good care of his students. In the nice university milieu of Dragvoll, he was a well-known and active figure. During thirty years Stang did all he could to improve the holdings and services of the library. He was able to form small groups of students in each generation working seriously on Latin America and Spain. When the dreadful disease broke him down three years ago, he still did not give up. He went on to teach and work until the very end. In all respects Gudmund Stang was a very courageous man.

A selection of his writings on Latin America:

"A measure of relative development?: A note on the education and dispersion of Scandinavian engineers 1870-1939." *I det lange løp: essays i økonomisk historie tilegnet Fritz Hodne*, Bergen-Sandviken 1997 pp. 87-100.

"América Latina en el espejo del sistema educacional noruego 1814-1977", *Estudios latinoamericanos*, vol. VI, part 2. Varsovia 1980, pp. 295-332

"Argentina, militären och demokratin". Utrikespolitiska institutet, Estocolmo 1989:6 (32 pages).

- "Aspectos de la política de personal de las empresas británicas en América Latina 1880-1930", *Capitales, empresarios y obreros en América Latina*. Instituto latinoamericano de la Universidad de Estocolmo, vol. 2, Estocolmo 1983, pp. 501-550.
- "Avviklingen av det latinamerikanske slavesamfunn, 1810-1870. De spansk-amerikanske statene", *Slaveri og avvikling i komparativt perspektiv*. Trondhjem 1983, pp. 201-222.
- "Compañía Corocoro de Bolivia 1873-1923. A Chilean Copper-Mining venture in Bolivia seen in the context of the contemporary development of the industry", *Ibero-Americana*, 23;1/2, Stockholm 1993, pp. 3-38.
- "Entrepreneurs and Managers. The Establishment and Organization of British Firms in Latin America in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries". *Historisk tidskrift*, Estocolmo 1982, pp. 40-61.
- "La emigración escandinava a la América Latina 1800-1940", *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas*, XIII, Colonia & Viena 1976, pp. 293-330.
- "La Unión sueco-noruega y su disolución (1814-1905). Puntos de partida para un análisis", *Cuando la luz venía del Norte. Suecia, Noruega y la Cataluña modernista*. Fundación Berndt Wistedt, Madrid 2001, pp. 83-104.
- "Malvinas/Falkland-krigen. En foreløpig analyse av årsakene". *Internasjonal Politik*, Oslo 1983, pp. 753-781.
- "Norway and Latin America". *The Study of Latin American History in Scandinavia*. Estocolmo 1973, pp. 33-37.
- "Report on the State of Research: Latin America", *The History of the Third World in Nordic Research*. Ed. by Magnus Mörner and Thommy Svensson. KVVVS, Göteborg 1986, pp. 167-169.,
- "The dispersion of Scandinavian engineers 1870-1930, and the concept of an Atlantic system". Dragvoll 1989: 3. (STS - working papers. 43 pp.).
- "The Shaping of a Market for Technical Know-How in Latin America 1670-1930". *Scandinavian Journal of History*, XI:1, Estocolmo 1986, pp. 71-88.