

copper and petroleum"—all of which has the earmarks of substituting one form of mercantilist thinking for another.

The fields of Latin-American economic history and economics are still open and inviting. The present parcel of essays establishes many useful landmarks and suggests attractive trails to follow, but it should rob no one of the stimulus to pursue both types of research beyond the established boundaries.

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*El movimiento obrero latinoamericano.* By MOISÉS POBLETE TRONCOSO. [Colección Tierra Firme, 17.] (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1946. Pp. 296. Paper.)

The first general history of trade-unionism in Hispanic America to be published comes from the pen of one who has followed its development for many years and is perhaps best equipped to write it. Nevertheless, the work in many ways is disappointing. The historian of trade-unionism in Hispanic America faces a tough job, because the raw materials with which he must work are either entirely missing or can be obtained only with the greatest difficulty. When passing judgment upon any work dealing with the subject, this must be taken into consideration. However, the inadequacies of the volume under review do not stem entirely from this fact.

In the introduction, the author states that the volume falls into three parts. Part one is devoted to an examination of different trade-union tendencies; part two, to a review of the legal status of unionism in Hispanic America; part three, to sketches of the history of trade-unionism in each country. Actually, the work is divided into six chapters, with the bulk of the material concentrated in chapter three (193 pages). This chapter deals with the development of unionism in each Latin-American republic except Haiti and Honduras. In addition, the volume includes chapters on inter-American trade-union relations, particularly as represented by the Pan-American Federation of Labor and the Latin-American Confederation of Workers, generally known as CTAL (Confederación de Trabajadores de América Latina), on the International Labor Office and its work in connection with the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively, and on the unions in the post-war world. There is also included a selected bibliography.

The discussions on trade-unionism in each country are characterized by extreme unevenness. The best section in the book is the one devoted to the development of unionism in Chile. Here the author speaks with the assurance and authority based upon more than twenty years of

careful study, for Dr. Poblete Troncoso published his first history of labor in his native land back in 1925. The least satisfactory part is the one on Argentina. Dr. Poblete devotes sixty pages to the Chilean history and crowds sixty years of Argentine labor history into eighteen pages. The Argentine labor movement is one of the oldest and in some respects the most stable of the Latin-American trade-union movements. Dr. Poblete fails to give a coherent picture of trade-unionism in Argentina. Nor does he explain the forces which were responsible for the different central organizations whose history he briefly traces.

Superficially, the volume gives the impression that the author has merely presented a factual review of the labor movement in each country. In reality, the study is extremely biased and prejudiced. This is evident both in what the author chose to include and in what he omitted. The general approach to his subject-matter appears to have been influenced by the war and by his admiration for the CTAL and its leader Lombardo Toledano. Much of the information about the recent labor movements comes almost exclusively from CTAL sources and reflects its point of view. Nowhere does the author face frankly the influence or role of the communists. In fact, he seems to shy away from the word "communist" and prefers to substitute the more inclusive term, "Marxist."

The reviewer feels that had greater care been taken, some of mistakes of fact and interpretation which are scattered through the volume could have been avoided. This statement is made without any desire to minimize the difficulties which faced the author. Seldom are the membership figures which are presented questioned and often no source references for them are given. On the question of source references, one wonders why they are given for some facts and not for others. There is not a single source reference for the sections dealing with the movements in Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, El Salvador, and Uruguay. In at least one case (p. 261), the author gives what purports to be a direct quotation from the American Federation of Labor, accusing it of having asked for intervention in Cuba to protect American financial interests, without citing the source of the quotation.

It seems that before an adequate general history of trade unionism in Hispanic America can be written more monographs, at least for those countries where development has been greatest, will have to be published. In the meantime, the author deserves our thanks for doing a pioneer job.

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