

between hard covers, as in a brief report by Manuel Agustín Aguirre of Central University in Quito on some Ecuadorean political developments of 1960-1961; and in part of Harvey O'Connor's ill-informed piece on Venezuela, written around 1951 and now having lost even the timeliness which was its only merit when it first appeared. There is a speech by Francisco Julião, organizer of the peasant leagues of the Brazilian Northeast, which is good and often moving oratory, but quite lacks any denotive content. There is a naive report by Paul Sweezy of an interview with Lázaro Cárdenas, which this reviewer found interesting, though saddening, for its account of the position to which the evolution of the General's views have now taken him. There is a well-written "Listen, Yankee" harangue by Carlos Fuentes, the noted Mexican novelist. But there are also sincere attempts at description, analysis, and exposition which are not vitiated by their Marxist standpoint but rather are led by it to raise significant questions often overlooked. The piece on Peru by the journalist and playwright Sebastian Salazar Bondy, "Andes and Sierra Maestra" is partly of this character, as are Leo Huberman's "Which Way for Latin America?" and Andrew Gunder Frank's "Mexico: The Janus Faces of 20th Century Bourgeois Revolution."

In many ways this is a very bad book. The sheer ignorance of the contributors is frequently shocking, and the views expressed are often dogmatically obtuse. Nevertheless, a theme of central relevance to the Latin America of today runs through the book, usually implicitly, but on occasion explicitly stated: that thoroughgoing social and economic change in the interest of greater justice and popular welfare in Latin America is not possible within the legal and constitutional framework of liberal democratic society. This is unfortunately a thesis which democrats cannot afford to dismiss out of hand.

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#### BACKGROUND

*The Age of Reconnaissance, Discovery, Exploration, and Settlement, 1450-1650.* By J. H. PARRY. Cleveland, 1963. The World Publishing Company. Maps. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xv, 365. \$7.50.

Parry's book is not the usual story of the Great Age of Discovery. Instead of an account limited to incorrect geographical theory, cartography, and adventure, we receive a thorough survey of all that

went into making the great age possible and conclude with an analysis of the results.

Of the three parts of the work, Part I, consisting of seven chapters, assesses the physical, intellectual, and economic means at the disposal of Europeans when they began exploring in the 15th century. Part II, six chapters long, furnishes the narrative, mostly of the Iberian peoples but with attention also to the English, French, and Dutch, of the sea voyages, land discoveries, and earliest conquests in the Old World and the New. Part III, also in six chapters, describes the empires, once founded, and discusses their economies, the character of their colonists, and the nature of their governments. The concluding chapter, entitled "The rights of conquerors and conquered," analyzes the thoughts and writings of three Spanish political theorists, Vitoria, Las Casas, and Sepúlveda. While not leaning to the side of Sepúlveda in his famous debate with Las Casas over Indian rights, Parry does him more justice than he usually receives.

There are eighty illustrations, grouped together between pages 176 and 177. These are mostly, but not entirely, old, and include pictures of ships and shipbuilding, real and imaginary portraits of characters, interesting pictures and woodcuts of colonial scenes, and reproductions of old maps.

Any undertaking of the scope of Parry's is apt to be a balance sheet of good and not-so-good qualities. Beyond question, the good overbalances the bad in this case. The narrative parts are not remarkable, but the organization is excellent. The author skillfully weaves together complicated threads of world history and the reader encounters the world's highest cultures and the world's lowest, from Papacy to Papua and from Paris to Patagonia. He also encounters all the continents, including Australia, and all the oceans except the Antarctic.

Yet the present review is not a paean of praise, for Professor Parry commits errors; altogether too many of them. Most could have been avoided by consultation with the right books or the right persons. It is worse than loose phraseology to speak of Timur the Lame as "the last great nomad Mongol Khan," when he did not use the title khan and was neither nomad nor Mongol. The accompanying remark that a Castilian embassy to Timur found him already dead is likewise incorrect. The statement (p. 139) that Pero de Covilhã lived only thirteen years after his arrival in Abyssinia in 1493 is directly contradicted by our one piece of evidence on the subject, which shows him still alive in 1520. The elopement of Machin and Anna d'Arfet was doubtless fictitious, as Parry agrees (p. 146), but the fiction makes

them go to Madeira and not the Azores; indeed the author is on doubtful ground when he says the Azores were known at all in the 14th century. Atlantis and Antilla (or Antillia) were not simply different words for the same place as is assumed on page 148. The statement (p. 157) that after Vespucci "all Europe recognized America for what it was, a new continent and barrier between Europe and Asia," will not do, for much of Europe recognized no such thing, as the Magellan voyage and much later cartography prove. The sentence at the top of page 160 can only be taken as meaning that Magellan avoided touching Brazil, whereas he really spent some time there as Pigafetta attests. It would be better to say (p. 170) that human sacrifice had become rare among the Incas than that it had ceased altogether. It is worse than useless to cite as sole source for a very brief account of Amerigo Vespucci the inadequate and wholly out-of-date work of Clements Markham (p. 341). Finally, the modern map of the East Indies following the conclusion is entirely off in latitude: the 10th parallel north is drawn where the equator should be.

The list of errors, some trivial and some more serious, could be extended considerably beyond the one given here. They mar but do not spoil what might have been a superb book, and it is a tribute to Parry that his work remains good in spite of itself.

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*Land to the West. A Search for Irish and Other Pre-Viking Discoverers of America.* By GEOFFREY ASHE. New York, 1962. The Viking Press. Maps. Illustrations. Epilogue. Appendices. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 352. \$6.75.

*Land to the West* is a dichotomic epic that might well be guaranteed to hasten schizophrenia in any unsuspecting reader who takes the author seriously. So great is the bifurcation of claims and disclaimings (for the same things and events) that one feels he is being conned.

The dust jacket reads *A Search for Irish and Other Pre-Viking Discoverers of America*, and inside this cover we are reassured that the book is exactly that—a search for evidence and nothing more. There are to be no claims for discovery, only a pursuit of clues to see if an Irish discovery were plausible. But four blank pages from the cover we are confronted with the title page and a *different* subtitle: *St. Brendan's Voyage to America*. Before the text details the promised search for evidence, the reader is tossed the positive assertion that Brendan actually got over here. But this apparent contradiction is resolved (?) in the very last sentence (p. 297) of this remarkable nar-