

of their volume. The authors have written an interesting book, but it has no more weight than a morning newspaper. Far from being "a brilliant reconstruction of one of the central events of our time," as the flyleaf proclaims, this is but an entertaining pedestrian account.

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Historia diplomática de Colombia, 1810-1934. By RAIMUNDO RIVAS. Bogotá, 1961. Imprenta Nacional de Colombia. Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Bibliography. Indices. Pp. 812. Paper.

A century and a quarter of Colombia's diplomatic history, from the inception of the independence period (1810) to 1934, forms the substance of this work. Nineteen chapters of narrative, chronologically arranged, then topically by nation, and a concluding essay take the reader, in a fairly succinct fashion, through the maze of boundary disputes, difficulties with the United States and the major European powers, and, by 1934, the peaceful settlement of the bulk of Colombia's major historic diplomatic problems. Space does not permit a detailed description of the wide range of topics, incidents, claims, and counter-claims which are covered in this book.

Although possessing one of the richest foreign ministry archives in the Americas, Colombia has not seen fit to permit any scholars, save a very few nationals and a handful of foreigners, access to it. Thus, any book drawn from sources in the Archivo de Relaciones Exteriores is more than welcome. In this case, it is doubly so, since Raimundo Rivas (1889-1946) not only spent much of three decades (1913-1946) in the archives but, thanks to his earlier *Relaciones internacionales entre Colombia y los Estados Unidos. 1810-1850* (Bogotá, 1915) and his edition of *Escritos de don Pedro Fernández Madrid. Tomo I* (Bogotá, 1932), had clearly established himself as Colombia's leading diplomatic historian. Yet, despite Rivas' eminence as a student in

this field, and despite his several important diplomatic missions for Colombia, the book, which he had completed in 1935, was not to see publication for a quarter of a century, again illustrating the timorousness of Colombian officialdom regarding its diplomatic archives.

In the main, these apprehensions are without basis. As Rivas' book so clearly shows, Colombian diplomacy from 1810 to 1934 was based on policies of national self-interest and selfless idealism, with the latter predominating. Colombia's consistent adherence to the principle of peaceful arbitration of disputes and to the grand Bolivarian design of an Inter-American system of cooperation are eloquent testimony to the lasting influence of the statesmanship of Pedro Gual (1783-1862), Pedro Fernández Madrid (1817-1875), and Manuel Ancizar (1812-1882).

Students of intra-Latin American relations, as well as those concerned with the relations of the United States and Colombia, will profit much from this book. Colombianists can hardly afford to ignore it. For those interested in the internal history of Colombia, Rivas renders an important service. He clearly demonstrates the basically negative attitudes—intrinsically isolationist—of the legislative power and does much to strengthen the impression that very few executives (save Santander, Mosquera, and Rafael Núñez) really wielded much influence over Colombian foreign policy but, rather, followed the lead of their foreign ministers.

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Cuatro años de democracia. By ISAÍAS MEDINA ANGARITA. Prologue by ARTURO USLAR PIETRI. Caracas, 1963. Pensamiento Vivo, C. A. Pp. 176. Paper.

One of the major points of controversy in recent Venezuelan political history is the October, 1945, Revolution and the events surrounding it. The 1963 presidential campaign revived the controversy, and it has been extended by the posthumous publication of this auto-

biography by the deposed president, General Isaias Medina Angarita. The volume is brief and rather sketchy. It encompasses Medina's entry into politics after a military career, outlines the major policies of his administration, and concludes with a description of his ultimate removal from office.

Writing in measured tones of his executive responsibility, the author declares that "in order to avoid for my country the ills of prolonged turbulence, of insecurity, of civil war and of loss of international prestige, I hesitated not a moment in sacrificing . . . the Government over which I presided." Yet this does not square with the fact that sometimes heated fighting continued some two days after his departure from Venezuela. Furthermore, it is questionable whether the bulk of the military remained loyal to Medina, as he believes.

There is little question that the *medinista* period marked a substantial stride forward in the evolution of Venezuelan public affairs. Yet Medina's intellectual ties with the traditions of the past are apparent in his almost naive discussion of political problems and his unguarded optimism in the armed forces. A certain primitiveness shines forth in broad criticisms of the value of political parties in a constitutional democracy.

In sum, this book gives Medina's views on certain important matters but is far too brief to provide the kind of detailed analysis that might strengthen the position of his administration in the eyes of history.

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Los días y la política. By GONZALO BARRIOS. Caracas, 1963. Editorial Arte, C. A. Pp. 463. Paper.

With the passing of years Gonzalo Barrios has assumed an increasingly unique position in Venezuelan public affairs. One of the original founders of the movement that became today's *Acción Democrática*, he has been in the forefront of the struggle for political democracy and human freedom for over

three decades. Now his views of recent and contemporary developments, as expressed through a series of newspaper commentaries, have been reproduced under one cover.

More than 125 columns from *El Nacional* and *La República* of Caracas have been included, covering the period from May, 1958, to October, 1963. The diversity of subjects makes elaboration impractical. Among the subjects under discussion are, to mention but a few, the problem of leftist terrorism, government security measures, revision of the electoral code, operation of a bi-party coalition, policy toward recognition of non-constitutional regimes, the implementation of agrarian reform, and the role of a partisan democratic opposition.

In each of these areas, and in many others, Barrios is—as he concedes in the introduction—a partisan. Leader of his party's congressional organization until the recent elections, he has now succeeded to the presidency of *Acción Democrática*. Yet his position within the national polity is in large degree a function of character and temperament. A man with long experience in international circles, Barrios combines inward serenity with a subtle and discriminating mind. His spirit of compromise and toleration of hostile views are uncommon among Venezuelan figures, accounting in part for the esteem in which he is held by political antagonists. Thus his comments, while representing an important partisan view, at the same time provide enlightenment on major contemporary political issues in Venezuela.

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Derecho territorial ecuatoriano. By RAFAEL EUCLIDES SILVA. Guayaquil, 1962. Universidad de Guayaquil. Maps. Bibliography. Pp. xvi, 526. Suces 120.00.

This new publication on Ecuador's border problem was originally presented as a doctoral dissertation in law at the University of Guayaquil by one of its well known history professors. Never-