

*Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean 1900-1921.* By DANA G. MUNRO. Princeton, 1964. Princeton University Press. Notes. Index. Pp. 553. \$12.00.

In this new volume Professor Munro, a distinguished scholar, has given us a new interpretation of the Caribbean policy of the United States from 1901 to 1921. He clearly demonstrates that from Theodore Roosevelt to Woodrow Wilson there was a continuity in American policy during the three administrations. Despite Wilson's emphasis on moral precepts, the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, though rarely mentioned, was its basis. The author believes that this policy had three objectives. The first was to discourage revolutions, since they were the chief cause of controversies with European powers and an obstacle to material and social progress. To improve the standard of living was the second, and related objective, for unstable political conditions in this area were at least in part a result of the poverty of the masses. Officials in the Department of State sometimes held out as a third objective the prospect of increased trade and new fields for American investment, but Munro doubts whether these economic considerations had any great influence in the formulation of policy. "These objectives, whatever we may think of the way in which the American government tried to attain them, were," Munro concludes, "neither sinister nor sordid."

Munro also discusses what many people regard as an additional—and some consider the only—objective: to forward the selfish interests of American businessmen and bankers. It was true that many Americans living in the Caribbean countries did in fact benefit from the establishment of more orderly conditions and that certain American companies played an important part in the chain of events that led up to each intervention. But, Munro emphasizes, these were the incidental results of a policy whose real focus was political, not economic. The United States wanted stable governments in the Caribbean area: when it landed troops, arranged for loans, or took over control of the customs, it was trying various expedients which seemed likely to achieve the political goal which was the objective. This volume should do a great deal to destroy the myth of American economic imperialism in the Caribbean.

While Munro thus regards American policy as honorable and well-intentioned, he still finds much to criticize in the way it was implemented. He reviews in great detail American relations with each country in the Caribbean and Central America, with greatest emphasis on Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Nicaragua, and

he shows how Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson tried to achieve their goals. This reviewer believes that here Munro is concerned fundamentally with the problem of responsibility, or rather, the lack of it, and on both sides. In the first twenty years of this century the political leaders in Latin America, in their greed for money and power, created conditions in their homelands which practically cried out for American intervention. These developments occurred, moreover, at a time when the United States was most afraid of possible intervention from Europe and when the need to protect the new canal gave rise to additional strategic considerations.

American diplomacy, on the other hand, was greatly handicapped by the kind of information which came to the State Department. Responsible reaction to events in the Caribbean was difficult with few trained diplomats in the field. Young and inexperienced men, probably overwhelmed by what they saw, often reported conditions to be much worse than they actually were. Others, such as Minister Sullivan in the Dominican Republic, were not only incompetent but probably corrupt as well. As a result the Department too often had to rely on untrustworthy sources, men like Farnham of New York whose point of view reflected his personal interests. Finally, in many cases the president and the Secretary of State reacted to situations too quickly and too dramatically without even waiting for the necessary information, a procedure which obviously impeded reasoned and responsible diplomacy. Wilson, with this righteous approach, was the worst offender in this regard and more frequently than either Taft or Roosevelt, he acted in an undemocratic fashion. Too often he suppressed freedom of speech and press and refused to allow men who had been involved in revolutions to participate in elections. Wilson was more interested in stable government than good government. The increased interference in their internal affairs naturally led to growing complaints from the Latin Americans, but the policy makers in Washington continued to take it for granted that under practically any conditions they could do nothing but good.

Some readers might be disposed to criticize this volume on the ground that Munro has relied too heavily on State Department materials without paying enough attention to Latin American sources. The reply to this, of course, is that he has written a study of the policy of the United States, not that of the various Latin American countries. However, had Munro made more extensive use of the personal papers of the key American figures responsible for policy, he probably would have noted their emphasis upon investment and trade. At least, he would have found this true during the Taft administration.

This excellent and most important volume will be a center of controversy for many years to come. And really, what more can one ask of a good book?

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*Cuando reinaba su majestad el azúcar.* By ROLAND T. ELY. Buenos Aires, 1963. Editorial Sudamericana, S.A. Maps. Illustrations. Tables. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Indices. Pp. 875.

Cada vez que en Cuba se han operado transformaciones sociales o movimientos revolucionarios la bibliografía isleña se ha enriquecido con obras de acusado mérito. Señalemos el destierro de Saco en 1834 y la publicación de su prolija obra la "Historia de la Esclavitud" y baste recordar en la andariega vida de José Martí su caudalosa obra literaria, transida a veces de las agudezas de Gracián y en otras del creador fermento de su poesía genuinamente revolucionaria.

Desde la toma del poder por Fidel Castro a partir de 1959, se han escrito más de cien libros sobre la acariciante isla. Unos, interesados y como a horcajadas de la propaganda mundial de una doctrina que sólo ofrece hambre y déficits en la dignidad humana. Otros, veraces y analíticos como en disección de la estrata social y económica de un país llamado a desempeñar un papel trascendente en este punto de cambio que se opera actualmente en la mentalidad americana: en la del norte y en la del sur. Otros, que estudian las falsas grandezas y los recuerdos del ayer colonial, en que sobresalen las dotaciones de esclavos, los humeantes ingenios olorosos de azúcar, los cañaverales haciendo horizonte con la tierra y el tabaco soleándose en los cujes para su curación y añejamiento. A esta última clase pertenece la obra que nos ocupa "Cuando reinaba su majestad el azúcar" de Roland T. Ely.

En su composición se han incorporado dos trabajos previos: "Cuba entre las dos Isabeles" (1492-1832) y "Comerciantes Cubanos del Siglo XIX," que vieran la luz en La Habana, hace pocos años. La obra nos ofrece un esquemático recuento histórico de la isla mayor de las Antillas, con especial énfasis en el nacimiento y desarrollo de su industria azucarera, nos regala con viñetas de costumbres rurales en el corazón de Cuba y nos ofrece la estampa de los comerciantes extranjeros y criollos arraigados en las plazas de La Habana y Cienfuegos. Acaso, el aspecto más interesante reside en el pormenorizado estudio de la modernización de la industria azucarera, en las imágenes que esboza del patriarcado criollo de mediados del siglo XIX y de la