

the most forsaken classes in Europe. Sir Robert admired both Bolívar and Páez, but he was critical of their moderation in dealing with those who fomented insurrections. He considered exile, the usual punishment, too weak and noted that it was enforced with such laxness that soon the offenders were back again, plotting and endangering public order. He preferred capital punishment.

In his background summary of the independence movement Dupouy explains that those in power had survived long and bloody wars. Their political opponents were also veterans who had suffered and sacrificed with them. Therefore, it was impossible to expect those in power to treat their opponents like criminals. The editor's thesis is that Bolívar and Páez were inadvertent foci of antagonism, but not opponents, properly speaking. Party struggle commenced with an opposition between followers, not between leaders who admired and respected each other. Both Páez and Bolívar were founders of the republic, both esteemed as protectors. Hence paternalistic regimes were the first kind of government with which Venezuelans (and others) became acquainted after independence.

According to Dupouy, Sir Robert became "the most influential foreigner of his times in the young Republic of Venezuela." The editor summarizes his achievements as consul (1825-1835) and as chargé (1835-1841). One who would not have endorsed this judgment of Ker Porter was John G. A. Williamson, a crusty Presbyterian from North Carolina who arrived in 1826 (a year after Sir Robert) to serve as consul for the United States. Williamson did not like his English colleague, and, as it turned out, Sir Robert returned the sentiment. As he wrote on April 19, 1836: "A sort of ceremony at the Casa de Gob^o on the anniversary of this day of 1810. . . . At 5 or rather near 7, the Vice Pres^{nt} gave a dinner in honor thereof. Plenty of *all sorts*, both on and round the table some 30 persons public functionaries & Some speechifying the *friendly* nations were drunk—and M^r. Williamson, who is very *tenacious* of his *seniority* as Chargé d'Affaires, wanted to decline returning thanks—but I said as the oldest in Dip^e rank he must. He spoke in English instead of *Spanish*—and returned thanks in the name of all the F. Nations. In fact he *bitched* the business, even in his *mother* tongue."

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Venezuela siglo XX. By FEDERICO BRITO. La Habana, 1967. Casa de las Américas. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. 449. Paper.

The author of this book, Federico Brito Figueroa, is one of Vene-

zuela's leading Marxist historians, and a professor at the Universidad Central de Venezuela. The work first appeared in mimeograph form (Caracas, 1966) and was presented to the university by its author upon his promotion to a chair in the Faculty of Humanities.

Venezuela Siglo XX is divided into two parts. The first, covering 1900 to 1921 (the "Epoch of Imperialist Penetration"), contains three chapters: the economy, the people, and the social structure. The second, embracing the years 1922 to 1966 (the "Epoch of Neocolonialism"), while also subdivided into three chapters with the same headings, contains three-fourths of the book's substance. Although it won Havana's Casa de las Américas prize for the best essay of 1967, it is hardly that, but it is a solidly documented monograph, based mainly on official Venezuelan sources and reinforced with the author's own statistical apparatus and analyses.

Brito contends that by 1921 Venezuela had been transformed from a nation with a passive, marginal, tropical agriculture into one in which every sector of society and the economy was involved with the predatory capitalist system of the world at large. Students of Venezuelan economic history in this century will not discover much that is new in his presentation. The gargantuan role played in Venezuela's economy by petroleum capitalism and its newer partner, the iron ore industry, is already well known. This is also the case with the data demonstrating that Caracas has played a relatively minor role in industrial development. Despite its biases, this is a valuable contribution to Venezuelan social history in the twentieth century. Brito is one of the first to study (even spottily) the living and working conditions of rural Venezuelans over the past six decades. His own experiences as an organizer of farm labor in the State of Aragua in the mid-1940s and his personal involvement with their misery make his profiles of the peasantry graphic and meaningful. So too, in my view, is his treatment of the urban poor.

The reader of this book must be prepared to push his way through a forest of statistical tables. These detract from the narrative, since the text, too, is cluttered with statistics and figures which could well have been summarized or relegated to appendices and footnotes. A set of maps would also have helped to fix the massive array of data more coherently in the reader's mind, in my opinion. Apart from what may have been the Cuban typesetter's penchant for employing the word "crack" rather than "crash" to describe the events of 1929, the book is well printed. Notwithstanding its tendentious tone and viewpoint, it belongs on the shelf of every Venezuelanist.

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