

with which the two editors have undertaken their important contribution to Colombian historical study.

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Agrarian Reform in Colombia. By ERNEST A. DUFF. New York, 1968. Frederick A. Praeger. Praeger Special Studies in International Economics and Development. Map. Tables. Figure. Notes. Appendices. Glossary. Bibliography. Pp. xi, 240. \$14.00.

The question posed in this book, at least implicitly, is: can agrarian reform be carried out successfully without a sweeping sociopolitical revolution? Duff is doubtful—a surprising answer from a former Foreign Service officer. The Colombian agrarian reform is often pointed to as a reassuring token of compliance with the requirements of the Alliance for Progress, but in fact it has gone forward very slowly. The budget of INCORA, the agrarian reform agency, has been only a fifth of the amount stipulated in the land reform law of December 1961. And the emphasis in the program has shifted from land redistribution in densely populated areas to the politically easier course of colonizing marginal lands. Duff concludes that the reform has gone and will continue to go slowly—in part because of opposition from conservatives in the Colombian political and economic elites, but even more because of half-heartedness among those who supposedly favor the program.

This book, a sequel to Albert Hirschman's chapter in *Journeys toward Progress*, is more skeptical about the possibility of engineering fundamental social change from the top. Hirschman described the process of agrarian reform to mid-1962 as a "revolution by stealth," a reform carried out by a small part of the elite without the support of widespread public pressure. He ended his study with the anticipation that INCORA would now need to develop "that direct support from public opinion which had not been invoked earlier." Writing four years later, Duff concludes that INCORA has failed—indeed has not even tried—to develop a constituency for change in an organized, politically involved peasantry. He believes that INCORA and the Liberal proponents of agrarian reform have not attempted to arouse peasants to support the program because they fear that the campesinos, once awakened, might prove a political Frankenstein's monster. Ultimately the reform has been stifled because both its supporters and its opponents have a primary common interest in the continuance of political control by the upper class.

One is inclined to accept the fundamental truth of these observa-

tions. It may be, however, that the author has taken too short a view of the question. The first four years of INCORA's operations, on which his conclusions are largely based, were conducted under the Conservative government of Guillermo León Valencia (1962-1966). Valencia and his political circle were not ardent supporters of agrarian reform, and, as Duff points out, his ministry of agriculture changed hands frequently, many ministers being hostile to land redistribution. It would hardly be surprising if during these years Enrique Peñalosa, the director of INCORA, had trimmed his sails on the questions of redistribution vs. colonization and social change vs. productivity increases, and if INCORA workers had refrained from political agitation. The author himself notes that in 1967, immediately after the inauguration of Carlos Lleras Restrepo (the legislative father of the 1961 law), the pace of redistribution quickened. There remains the perhaps remote possibility that the program will advance at a moderate pace or even speed up, when the political straitjacket of the *Frente Nacional* is finally removed during the next six years.

There are some flaws in this book. The historical background on land tenure before 1930 is brief and sloppy. Without citing any authority the author asserts that only two significant changes in land tenure occurred in the nineteenth century, "a multiplication of small landholdings on poorer sites and a large increase in the amount of land owned by the Colombian government." By his account the Catholic Church "lost almost all its land in 1851 [*sic*]."

The discussion of the period after 1930 is better, but here too are questionable statements, such as the description of Gaitán as a Colombian Perón or the assertion that Lleras Restrepo has supported agrarian reform primarily because he is a devout Catholic. The suggestion that the "protest votes" (or abstentions from voting) in 1962 and 1966 were related to inaction on agrarian reform is dubious, particularly as elsewhere Duff stresses the lack of peasant pressure for reform.

The book usefully summarizes the discussions of the reform in the Colombian Congress. It also outlines, analyzes, and refutes the principal objections made in Colombia to land redistribution. At the end it competently sets forth the continuing problems of financing the reform, political opposition, la Violencia, administrative and legal difficulties, and various technical problems. This is necessarily an interim report. But on the agrarian reform itself it is a sound and informative study.