

Chilean Politics, 1920-1931. The Honorable Mission of the Armed Forces. By FREDERICK M. NUNN. Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1970. University of New Mexico Press. Appendices. Notes. Bibliographical Note. Index. Pp. x, 219. Cloth. \$10.00.

The Chilean military's "Honorable Mission" in the 1920s was to assure government responsibility, even though this might entail destroying the cracking facade of liberal democracy, and to bring about social and economic reforms. The Honorable Mission, as described by Professor Nunn, was undertaken at the beginning of 1925 by a group of middle and junior grade officers after the senior officers, who captured control of the military movement that overthrew Arturo Alessandri in September 1924, demonstrated their opposition to reform. As "jefe máximo" of the Honorable Mission, Carlos Ibáñez del Campo "showed the determination of the mission's perpetrators to eliminate . . . all possibilities of a political reaction" (p. 103). Nunn is convincing as he argues that civilian politics had putrefied, and so regeneration had to come from an outside power, the military. "There were no other means, no alternatives for the uniformed reformers and an increasing number of civilian allies" (p. 126).

The Honorable Mission was also tinged with personal ambitions and the desire to serve the military's corporate interests. Only by political action, Nunn points out, could the junior and middle grade officers "rise to the top and push aside the generals, many of whom . . . had no professional military education whatsoever" (p. 111). In short, a new group of technically trained middle-sector officers wished to acquire more power, thereby emulating certain civilian middle-sector men with new skills and expertise who had already begun to wrest considerable power from the traditional elite.

Various shortcomings of the Ibáñez rule are acknowledged. Thus the book makes it clear that the economic progress achieved by the dictator was based largely on foreign investment and loans, not on effective internal capitalization. Not until after the effects of the great depression were already being felt in Chile did the Ibáñez administration devise a program for tapping local wealth through income and inheritance taxes.

On the whole, though, Ibáñez comes off rather well in the Nunn treatment, certainly better than Arturo Alessandri. Probably this is as it should be; for Alessandri did not really have the chance to show his abilities until his second presidential term (1932-38), when he proved that civilians could after all administer the system of new

paternalism that he himself had to some degree conceived but that only dictator Ibáñez had been able to bring into being.

Solidly researched in Chilean collections and in the National Archives of the United States Library of Congress, Nunn's book tells a great deal about civil-military relations in the 1920s. The author is reliable in his use of sources and objective in his judgments. Although it introduces few particularly challenging or controversial new interpretations, the work merits warm praise.

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Essays on the Economic History of the Argentine Republic. By CARLOS F. DÍAZ ALEJANDRO. Foreword by GUSTAV RANIS. New Haven and London, 1970. Yale University Press. Map. Graphs. Tables. Appendices. Index. Pp. xvi, 549. Cloth. \$18.50.

More than twenty-five years ago, Felix J. Weil argued that the key to Argentine economic history was in a fundamental conflict between nascent industry and entrenched grazing interests. What made Argentina a pastoral rather than manufacturing nation, he wrote in *The Argentine Riddle* (1944), was less natural endowments than the disproportionate influence of a small elite of beef barons and importers. Hence, resolution of the "industrial question" involved not only issues of economic expediency but social power as well, a fact amply recognized by the Argentine ranching class, which did all it could to postpone the day when the countryside would no longer be the focal point of economic activity.

In the years since its appearance, Weil's thesis has become the cornerstone of an entire economic literature emphasizing Argentina's "lost opportunities" for industrial development. In the later years of the nineteenth century, so the argument runs, Argentina's leaders sacrificed the chance for economic diversification to "get rich quick" on meat and cereals. Although the disadvantages of economic dependency should have become apparent to them during the First World War, they did nothing to protect the small amount of industry which had grown up in the shadow of that conflict, so that a second chance was lost amidst the economic euphoria of the mid-twenties. During the world depression, Conservative governments spurned a third opportunity, to take refuge instead in restrictive bilateralism, protectionism-in-reverse, and excessively generous concessions to British trade and investment. Hence, the industrial growth of the late 'thirties and early 'forties, far from being a Conservative achievement, came about in spite of and in opposition to government policies—the biggest