

represented São Paulo state in the national capital until the revolution of 1930 ended his congressional service.

That a son's biography would insist on his subject's good judgment and highmindedness at every juncture is perhaps to be expected, but Azevedo's character emerges clearly: he was rigid, sober, honest, unexpansive, and humorless.

The study is partly based on hitherto unpublished documents in Azevedo's private papers, which, as they appear here, contain few surprises. We do get a confirmation of the decisiveness and toughness of Washington Luís, and see his role more clearly, for example, in the May 1922 presidential succession crisis. Yet we must lament the author's virtual silence on Azevedo's role in most of the events that critically affected São Paulo—for example, the valorization transactions of 1917, 1921, and 1924, and the presidential successions of 1910 and 1930. Missing also are descriptions of PRP executive committee operations and the political dynamics of the chamber when Azevedo was its president.

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*Dom Helder Câmara: The Violence of a Peacemaker.* By JOSÉ DE BROUCKER. Translated by HERMA BRIFFAULT. Foreword by RICHARD SHAULL. Maryknoll, New York, 1969, 1970. Orbis Books. Illustrations. Pp. xiii, 154. Cloth. \$4.95.

Although clerical radicalism runs like a thread through Latin America's history, it did not emerge as a widespread pattern until the 1960s. The coincidence of Cuba's revolution, the arrival of left-wing priests from Europe, and the diffusion of ideas from Vatican Two, prompted many new orientations regarding the Church's role in social change. Among these new orientations, one defines the priest's vocation as humanitarian rather than sacramental and urges upon him bold, unconditional engagement in the revolutionary struggle. Various terms identify the initiatives that flow from his model: Christian revolutionaries, the guerrilla church, Third World priests, etc. Their targets are the rich, the powerful, and all groups or elites that perpetuate misery, exploitation, and oppression.

One of the most significant exponents of contemporary Christian radicalism is Dom Helder Câmara, archbishop of Olinda and Recife in Northeastern Brazil, and this book is a sympathetic and engaging portrait of Câmara the popular and influential prelate. The author,

a Frenchman, has organized his descriptions according to Câmara's present statuses and involvements. We see him at work in his diocese as pastor and ecclesiastic, in his public appearances on behalf of justice and peace, and Câmara as poet and observer of humanity. By juxtaposing these various facets of the archbishop's life, the author is able to point to certain puzzles in his make-up, e.g., the apparent contradiction between Câmara the public radical and Câmara the patient and obedient ecclesiastic. Câmara states: "Any desire of Rome is a command for me."

There are several important themes in the book, one being Câmara's commitment to nonviolence as a means of revolutionary change. Unlike many Christian revolutionaries, Câmara abjures violence, preferring to emphasize moral pressures, education, and public speaking. Another theme, general to the Christian revolutionaries, is the problem of translating lofty ideals into definite norms of action. The author observes: "Dom Helder keeps on speaking out in public, but his vision has not really taken the form of a program." A third theme, emerging in the autobiography of the Epilogue, is the way in which a priest's career, and thus the life of the Church, is interwoven with political life and governmental structures. Though none of these themes is pulled out and cohesively explicated, they are there for the reading.

Perhaps one theme that should have been included in the book is the significance of Dom Helder's style for redefining the role of the bishop. By virtue of the Church's recent teachings, the proclamations of Medellín, and the symbolic position of Catholicism in Latin America, contemporary bishops fall under a special responsibility to articulate ethical norms and to bring the prestige of their office to the side of nonviolent change. Helder Câmara, though pushed aside by the violent left and despised by the far right, seems to be trying to build such a role for the Catholic bishop, and many of us hope that his efforts are not in vain.

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#### BACKGROUND

*Historia de España: Edad media.* By LUIS SUÁREZ FERNÁNDEZ. Madrid, 1970. Editorial Gredos. Bibliography. Pp. 729. Cloth.

Over the last twenty years, Luis Suárez Fernández, *catedrático* at Valladolid, has established himself as one of the foremost historians