

*Political Groups in Chile: The Dialogue Between Order and Change.*

By BEN G. BURNETT. Austin and London, 1970. Published for the Institute of Latin American Studies by the University of Texas Press. Latin American Monographs, 21. Charts. Tables. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xiv, 319.

Ben G. Burnett's *Political Groups in Chile* is a descriptive, rather than analytical, study of Chilean political institutions, both formal and informal. An admirably concise introductory chapter acquaints the reader with basic demographic and economic problems of the country. Further chapters deal with the mass media and their influence, with the main interest groups—military, clergy, students, management and labor—and with the political parties, whose organization and programs are described in detail.

The picture that emerges is that of a democratic political system capable of promoting gradual, evolutionary social change. This, indeed, is the impression which the country made on openminded foreign observers in the early and middle nineteen-sixties, the period in which Professor Burnett carried out his field research. In a concluding chapter, he sketches the course of events in the second half of the decade, which, as he puts it, "raised serious questions about the Chilean political system . . . and its ability to convert groups' aims into effective policy formation and greater group satisfaction." The pace of change since Salvador Allende's presidential inauguration in November 1970 has been such that in his account of the economic and political power structure and of the relations between the various interest groups the author already appears to be relating the history of a past epoch. But even if this should prove to be the case, Professor Burnett's well-written, carefully researched book will still be of value. As Alexis de Tocqueville pointed out, even a cataclysm on the scale of the French Revolution did not interrupt historical continuity to such an extent that knowledge of the pre-revolutionary past became irrelevant to an understanding of the post-revolutionary era.

Massachusetts Institute  
of Technology

ERNST HALPERIN

*Agrarian Problems and Peasant Movements in Latin America.* Edited by RODOLFO STAVENHAGEN. Garden City, New York, 1970. Doubleday & Company. Tables. Pp. xi, 583. Paper. \$2.45.

*La cuestión agraria y los problemas del movimiento de liberación en*

*la América Latina*. By V. Volski *et alli*. Moscow, n.d. Editorial de la Agencia de Prensa Nóvosti. Tables. Pp. 157. Paper.

In *Agrarian Problems and Peasant Movements in Latin America*, Rodolfo Stavenhagen has compiled an excellent group of essays, some original and some previously published, authored by a cross-section of social scientists from the United States, Latin America, and Europe. The purpose of these essays is to provide the reader with a somewhat general and introductory view of the numerous problems and aspects that the agrarian question creates. For this purpose, then, this book is divided into three sections. While the first section deals with the traditional agrarian structures, the second is concerned with the controversial issue of agrarian reform. The third and final part specifically deals with the various ways peasants have reacted to a changing agrarian structure.

The agrarian question is also handled in the readable but doctrinaire Soviet study entitled *La cuestión agraria y los problemas del movimiento de liberación en la América Latina*. The nine essays in the book attempt to reexamine the various points of view, the profundity of facts, and the established social and economic trends that make this question so important. Each chapter "scientifically" analyzes the different socio-economic aspects of this question. All conclude that the majority of the peasants are ruthlessly exploited, oppressed, pauperized, fooled, and starved by a socio-economic system and political situation ruled by a dictatorial oligarchy. This oligarchy is composed of a few wealthy landowners and numerous merchants and industrialists who not only have incorporated the capitalistic spirit into agricultural production but who also are vehemently loyal to and dependent upon foreign imperialism—namely the USA. To the Soviet scholars, the agrarian question is one of the most important economic and social problems, as well as a pressing political one. Thus, it requires from the exploited peasants some organized and systematic forms of action in order to "liberate" their country from tyranny, capitalism, imperialism, and deprivation.

Whatever tactics the peasant movements employ, their potential for success is severely limited by the inherent weaknesses and cleavages that are inimical to such organizations as well as by the flexibility of their enemies in developing new forms of subordination and domination. According to these Soviet scholars, peasant movements can, thus, only be successful when there is a close and inseparable cooper-

ation between the agrarian and industrial proletariats. It will be this vanguard of the people, in conjunction with the Communist Party, that will liberate the country.

Franklin College

KENNETH PRAEGER