

*Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality.* By JOSÉ CARLOS MARIÁTEGUI. Translated by MARJORY URQUIDI. Introduction by JORGE BASADRE. Austin and London, 1971. University of Texas Press. Glossary. Index. Pp. xxxvi, 301. Cloth. \$8.50.

José Mariátegui emerged during the ferment in Peru during the 1920s as the main spokesman for the idea that Peru needed to create a type of socialism that was based on the indigenous institutions preserved through the centuries since the conquest. Peru, he wrote, suffers from "a dualism of race, language and sentiment, born of the invasion and conquest of indigenous Peru by a foreign race that has not managed to merge with the Indian race, or eliminate it, or absorb it."

The essays in this book are all variations on this theme, an attempt to answer the question of how Peru could unite its two disparate human groups, its two cultures, its two ways of life. The ideas expressed in these essays written in the 1920s have been continuously debated in the decades since they were first published, and Peru's history since then has been a struggle between those who favored efforts to unify the population by revolutionary change and those who have succeeded in preserving the traditional organization of the country.

In this struggle, the name of Mariátegui has been a "banner" as both the Communists and the Apristas claimed to be the true interpreters of his ideas. Since Mariátegui died in 1930 before either of the two parties got organized, no one really can say with which of the two groups he would have associated himself, but his ideas were closer to those of the Apristas than to those of the Communists. Yet he called himself a Marxist and saw economics as the basic force within society.

For the scholar this is an essential book to understand Peru's intellectual history.

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*Balmaceda.* By RAÚL SILVA CASTRO. Santiago de Chile, 1969. Editorial Nascimento. Pp. 100. Paper.

Raúl Silva Castro, Director of the Chilean Academy, poet, literary critic, long-time editorial writer for *El Mercurio* of Santiago, and visiting professor at several universities in the United States, has written an interesting little book about the career of José Manuel Balmaceda Fernández, president of Chile from 1886 until the end of the ill-fated civil war of 1891.

This war, its causes, and disastrous consequences, have been subjects of great interest ever since. Admirers of Balmaceda have maintained that the war was brought on by the men of a conservative and unenlightened congress, perhaps in league with foreign interest, concerned with their own selfish ambitions, while the president was a true liberal who cared about the fate of the masses and the future of responsible democratic government in Chile.

Not so, says the author. The congressional opposition was just as patriotic as the president and did not support foreign interests in Chile. In fact, the president brought on most of the trouble himself and acted like a man who had completely taken leave of his senses during the crisis.