

A History of Belize. By NARDA DOBSON. London, Trinidad and Jamaica, 1973. Longman Caribbean. Maps. Illustrations. Table. Appendices. Index. Pp. xiv, 362. Cloth, \$11.00; Paper, \$3.75.

The seventeenth-century log-cutting and buccaneering base at Belize evolved by the end of the eighteenth century into a *de facto* British settlement, and in the nineteenth century it became the colony of British Honduras. Since then it has moved slowly but perceptibly toward independent status. Frequently touched upon in a peripheral way by historians of Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean, or in monographs dealing with limited periods and topics, the internal development of Britain's Bay of Honduras enclave has until now not been the subject of a serious, general work. Beginning with the Maya, Narda Dobson has narrated in detail the history of the people who have inhabited this corner of Central America and of the policies and events that have determined its growth and decline.

A third of the work describes the pre-Columbian residents, Spanish discovery and exploration, and the origins and establishment of the British settlement. Part Two, the most carefully researched and valuable third of the work, details the political, economic, and social growth of the settlement under its ill-defined sovereignty from 1798 to 1862. Dobson analyzes the structure and operation of the government, the forest industries on which the economy rested, and the transition from slavery to free labor, which was the primary social factor of the century and which followed a noticeably different course than in the British West Indies. The final third of the book traces Belize's development since 1862. Dobson acknowledges the economic decline that Wayne Clegern detailed in his *British Honduras, Colonial Dead End* (Baton Rouge, 1967), but she is reluctant to attribute the decline to changes in Central American trade patterns to the extent that Clegern suggests. She regards the stagnation of the economy as temporary and points optimistically toward successful attempts at diversification, as sugar and citrus products have surpassed timber as the colony's principal exports.

The most glaring weakness of the work is that it ignores too many Central American sources. There are almost no references to works in the Spanish language, and such works as Troy Floyd, *The Anglo-Spanish Struggle for Mosquitia* (Albuquerque, 1967), Thomas Karnes, *Failure of Union* (Chapel Hill, 1961), and William Griffith, *Empires in the Wilderness* (Chapel Hill, 1965), which offer much insight into Central American attitudes toward the British presence in Belize, are also overlooked. This is regrettable, for while the settlement has often

been isolated, it has not been unobserved nor unaffected by its Spanish-speaking neighbors. On the other hand, the work reflects extensive utilization of manuscript and printed sources in Britain and Belize.

Grinding no discernible ideological axes, Dobson offers plausible explanations for historical problems as they arise. She offers a sympathetic, yet not uncritical, analysis of Belize's experience. As a detailed narrative text on the internal history of the settlement, it should be of lasting importance.

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Evolução do Catolicismo no Brasil. By JOÃO ALFREDO DE SOUSA MONTENEGRO. Petrópolis, Brazil, 1972. Editora Vozes. Bibliography. Pp. 188. Paper.

Add this book to the growing file, "search for Brazilian reality." Limited to neither narrative synthesis nor critical exposition, it recalls João Camilo de Oliveira Torres's *História das idéias religiosas no Brasil* (1968), the penetrating, sometimes quirky, and always stimulating account subtitled "A Igreja e a sociedade brasileira." Both draw on a broad range of sources, theological and philosophical, ecclesiastical and juridical, Brazilian and European, historical and sociological. Of the two, Oliveira Torres has a wider range and a far surer sense of what is logically apposite and historically enlightening.

Montenegro's first chapter, "A Igreja na Colônia," is pretty well informed by two sweeping if not equally valid generalizations: "axiologicamente, o português adere mais ao feudalismo que ao espírito da burguesia, sustando a larga diferenciação social e, portanto, a abertura intelectual. Forçosamente, a religião em Portugal . . . abrigaria idealizações místicas, quase nada conformadas a uma espiritualidade realista . . . o providencialismo, que tudo faz esperar na inatividade . . . vai marcar fundamente [sic] a cultura brasileira, compondo o núcleo talvez fundamental da caracteriologia do povo, logo esboçada e estruturada na Colônia" (pp. 18, 23).

The next two chapters, half the book, are devoted to the Empire which "foi além da marca. Ou melhor, enveredou por um caminho desviante do critério lógico e seguiu uma política usurpadora dos direitos eclesiásticos" (p. 43). Again we reach the Religious Question, or in the words of Oliveira Torres: "em grande parte, uma autêntica comédia de erros." Just what "a Sociologia do Conflito" as here presented contributes to the understanding of historical data is not made clear. In the last chapter the reader might expect Montenegro's evalu-