

Human Rights and United States Policy toward Latin America. By LARS SCHOULTZ. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981. Notes. Tables. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xvii, 421. Cloth.

This book is a view of the United States human rights policy toward Latin American countries in the period of the 1970s. Attention is given not only to Congress and the Department of State, but also to the very important and often neglected role of private lobbying organizations. A great deal of fascinating detail about the relations of interest groups and members of Congress is provided on the basis of documentary research and interviews. The policy of the United States with respect to loans in multilateral lending agencies is also analyzed. A chapter is devoted to "Linkages to the U.S. Private Sector," in which the activities of the Export-Import Bank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the American Institute for Free Labor Development are surveyed. The conclusion of this chapter is that it is difficult to be certain why no serious attempt was made by the Carter administration "to influence private sector transactions that supported repressive governments in Latin America" (p. 342).

Curiously enough, little attention is given to the United States policy toward the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The IACHR does not even rate an acronym in the list of eighty-one in the "List of Abbreviations" (p. xv). The special fund made available by the United States to the IACHR in 1977 is not mentioned, nor is the fact that the IACHR, a major organ of the OAS, has provided, through 1981, a principal source of vital activity of the organization, since its political significance has slanted downhill even before the debacle of 1979 over Nicaragua.

There are several points about which questions may be raised. On the one hand, the author states that "public opinion occupies an extremely limited amount of space in the societal environment surrounding the formal and informal processes by which United States policy toward Latin America is created" (p. 46). Yet it appears later that there are numerous active "representatives" of public opinion in the form of pressure groups such as the Washington Office on Latin America, that are knowledgeable about, and exert constant pressure in favor of policies deemed favorable to the rights of foreigners. "By 1977, the combined interest groups concerned with the repression of human rights in Latin America had become one of the largest, most active, and most visible foreign policy lobbying forces in Washington" (p. 75). Similarly, there is the "straw man" suggestion: "Those foreign policy officials who view every Third World peasant as a potential threat to U.S. national security will

always be unremitting foes of social change" (p. 378). Finally there is a reference to El Salvador: ". . . it would seem that a policy of providing pyromaniacs with matches so that they can fight fires reflects the design of persons who have taken leave of their reason" (p. 360 n.24).

At the end, the author concludes that human rights activists, in the 1970s, made significant progress in forcing the United States government "to cease supporting Latin American political groups that use repression to thwart change," and in fighting against private and public movements in the United States that obstruct Latin American "political movements whose policies are designed to meet basic needs" (p. 379).

This book is a sobering, yet inspiring, account of the struggle for human rights in the 1970s, and it is hoped that a sequel may tell the story of a no less intense and hopeful contest in the 1980s by Representative Harkin, Senator Kennedy, and others.

Executive Associate, Emeritus
Social Science Research Council

BRYCE WOOD

RELATED TOPICS

The Transition to Statehood in the New World. Edited by GRANT D. JONES and ROBERT R. KAUTZ. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981. Notes. Tables. Figures. Bibliography. Index. Pp. ix, 254. Cloth. \$27.50.

Two months apart (November 1978, January 1979) three conferences were organized to compare the political and economic structures of Native American states. The proceedings of the first, held at Madrid, have been published (*Economía y sociedad en los Andes y Mesoamérica*, Revista de la Universidad Complutense, vol. 117); those of the second, *The Inca and Aztec States*, are due late in 1982. The book before us reports on the third and is different from both of the above: all the authors are anthropologists from the United States; their stress is on evolutionary changes leading to the emergence of centralized political structures.

Social stratification, insofar as it can be deduced from archaeological evidence, is a major feature of most of the essays. Authors disagree about the evidence for a "unitary theory of the origin of chiefdoms and, by