

thesis is clearly defensible. Not the least of his contributions is his analysis of Velasco Ibarra, who, in his unique and often flamboyant way, was one of the more interesting and colorful Latin American figures of his generation.

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Curaçao. By RENÉ RÖMER. Foreword by B. M. LEITO. Curaçao: UNICA, 1981. Map. Tables. Notes. Figures. Bibliography. Pp. 244. Paper.

This compact volume offers in very readable form a survey of Curaçao society from its foundations as a Dutch trading post in the seventeenth century and its experience as a slave colony, to the decolonization process in the twentieth century.

Among the author's conclusions about the nature of Curaçao slave society is that "leniency" was not necessarily culturally determined. A comparison with Dutch Surinam, and an examination of plantation society in Curaçao itself, where conditions led to the 1795 slave revolt, reveals the existence of some harsher master-slave relationships in the Dutch slave regime. Rather, the general character of slavery in Curaçao was governed by the reality that most slave owners had only a few slaves, and mutual dependence between slave and owner qualified the harshness of the relationship between them.

A second conclusion is that rigid distinctions cannot be made among artisan, household, and agricultural slaves since the labor of each slave varied considerably.

The discussion in the second chapter demonstrates that emancipation (August 2, 1862) did not transform legal freedom into social and economic improvement for the laborer and that the law was used as an instrument to reinforce the free laborer's dependence on the planter, while color discrimination became an important variable in interpersonal relations and social mobility.

The third chapter examines the transformation of the stagnant economy of the post-emancipation era, under the impetus of oil refining, and discusses the implications for modern political movements, the formation of labor unions, modification of the racially based class structure, and the general factors, including racial ones, that sparked the 1969 riots.

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The United States and Latin American Sphere of Influence. Vol. I. *The Era of Caribbean Intervention, 1890–1930*. Edited By ROBERT FREEMAN SMITH. Melbourne, Fla.: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., 1981. Map. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. iv, 99. Paper. \$5.50.

This brief work, the first of presumably two volumes on the subject, is essentially a book of readings designed as a supplementary text to courses in United States diplomatic and Latin American history. Smith introduces the seventeen selections with a thirty-five-page summary of the Latin American policy of the United States from James Monroe to Herbert Hoover. The selections themselves, however, deal mostly with the origins and development of the United States empire in the Caribbean from the War with Spain to the second Nicaraguan intervention of 1926–33.

Smith has done an able job of identifying the various motives for Caribbean empire, presenting contemporaneous assessments of North America's role in the Caribbean, and, finally, offering interpretations of policy by seven historians (including, properly, himself).

Seventeen excerpts in only sixty pages, however, means that each selection can nec-

essarily cover only two or three pages. The result is that the reader, especially a student unfamiliar with this material, gets far too little substance from each selection. Regrettably, only one Latin American writer (Francisco García Calderón) is included.

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El Salvador: Embassy under Attack. By FRANK J. DEVINE. New York: Vantage Press, 1981. Notes. Glossary. Pp. ix, 209. Cloth. \$10.00.

Career diplomat Devine's book is about what it was like to be the United States ambassador to El Salvador and to operate the embassy in an environment of near constant violence. He served from 1977 to 1980, when terrorism, assassinations, kidnappings, embassy seizures, repression, and political polarization became commonplace. The former ambassador's descriptions and anecdotes successfully impart a sense of the tense and turbulent period.

As an analysis of the crisis in El Salvador, however, the book is lean. Devine provides neither a probing nor an involved examination, although he acknowledges the complexity of the situation and cautions against simplistic policies. For the most part, he offers generalizations and descriptions. He makes the generalization that the country's outmoded, inequitable, and brutally repressive social system caused the violence. Yet he chastises the more ardent reformers for being unrealistic and wanting to change too much of the socio-economic system too fast. He laments that the United States did not pressure El Salvador toward greater social justice decades earlier, yet he is convinced that the Carter administration's policies, particularly that of human rights, were overly zealous and introduced dangerous pressures and fissures in the country. (Carter replaced Devine with Robert White, a staunch advocate of human rights and reform in El Salvador.) He believes the crux of the problem was that the insurrectionists were controlled by Marxists bent on emulating the Cuban model. He doubts, however, that from 1977 to 1980 arms and munitions came from Cuba; he thinks most came from Nicaragua without the consent of the Sandinista regime.

During his tenure, Devine sought compromise between the contending factions; he ended concluding that compromise would not work because of the extreme polarization of the important elements in the country. The challenge then became to defeat the communist-led revolutionaries while at the same time fostering as much economic development and social justice as the country could reasonably absorb in order to gain support for the government.

The most interesting observations deal with the internationalization of the crisis. Again, Devine is more descriptive than analytical. Many of the nation's institutions, including political parties and the church, divided into factions and developed strong international ties. Worldwide human rights organizations and journalists from around the globe put the spotlight on El Salvador and further meshed the local with the global. Devine offers little understanding, however, of why, how, and when the situation became internationalized.

The book describes the ambassador's experiences in a violence-ridden country more than it examines the causes and dynamics of the turmoil. It has neither footnotes nor a bibliography.

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