

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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