

from colonial times onward, and then of that of Chalatenango. It then goes into the causes of the current civil war, which is seen as growing out of agrarian discontent, the new militancy of the Catholic church, and the unification of worker-peasant groups. The next part deals with the war in Chalatenango and the structure of the organizations formed in the territory held by the rebel forces. The conclusion returns to the agrarian theme of the book, stressing that whoever wins the civil war, real agrarian reform is going to be very difficult to achieve.

In many places the book conveys a strong sense of immediacy and is effective and moving, even though Pearce is obviously partisan in favor of the rebels. But the book does not hold together very well. A great deal of space is given to the general background, which has been covered better in other works. The style is episodic and impressionistic, and the long patches of direct quotes are at times not well integrated into the text. While claiming to be about Chalatenango, the book deals more frequently with El Salvador as a whole or offers examples from other parts of the country.

The author seems to intend an analysis of the development of the revolution in Chalatenango in somewhat the same manner as Carlos Rafael Cabarrús analyzed the Aguilaes region in his *Génesis de una revolución*, but this work lacks the rigorous methodology of that study. Nevertheless, many of the quotations from the people of the area are of considerable interest, and should be of value to anyone seeking to document the causes of local discontent. Therefore the book is of some interest to the student of Central American affairs.

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*Belize: A New Nation in Central America.* By O. NIGEL BOLLAND. Boulder: Westview Press, 1986. Maps. Illustrations. Tables. Notes. Select Bibliography. Index. Pp. xiv, 157. Cloth. \$26.50.

Belize received full political independence in 1981 and the long-term political regime of George Price which had nurtured independence was voted out of office in 1983–84. Thus this “profile” of the new nation is timely. It is a 140-page documented essay which analyzes both the history (38 pages) and contemporary society (102 pages) of Belize. The slighting of history in this arrangement is more apparent than real, because the contemporary analysis is thoroughly informed by historical data and perspectives. The author, a sociologist, intended to provide a brief, authoritative introduction to Belize and has succeeded in producing the most useful available survey of that Caribe-Centro-American nation. It is as clear as it is brief. If one has to prepare a lecture on Belize on short notice, this would be the source to go to. Beyond that, the deft synthesis provided in the contemporary portion amounts to a significant scholarly contribution to Belizean and Caribbean studies.

Correctly, Bolland says “Belize is so small and its economy is so open, [that] it is largely dependent on the international situation.” That might be said of many countries, but the author later makes clear that Belize is unique in that its very political independence derived from international sanctions involving specific guarantees from the United States, Great Britain, Mexico, and the United Nations. Settlement of the Guatemalan claim to Belize, thought for many years to be a prerequisite to full independence, was never completed. New strategic realities simply bypassed it in a manner reminiscent of the philosopher’s comment that Hegel was never disproven, merely abandoned.

From the historian’s viewpoint, there is one unfortunate bibliographical oversight. The career of Antonio Soberanis, a 1930s labor organizer, is important to the author’s historical analysis of the contemporary scene. Yet Peter Ashdown’s work on Soberanis is not cited. Although Ashdown’s dissertation, “Race, Class and the Unofficial Majority in British Honduras, 1890–1949” (University of Sussex, 1979), which broke new ground, may not have been published, he has published relevant articles. In a work aimed at the general reader, it would have been more useful for the author to cite one of Ashdown’s five publications on Soberanis in *Belizean Studies* (1977–78) rather than three or four documents in the Belize archives. Such a consideration does not change the fact that this is the best historical overview of Belize yet published.

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*Panama Money in Barbados, 1900–1920.* by BONHAM C. RICHARDSON. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986. Illustrations. Figures. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xiv, 283. Cloth. \$24.95.

This splendidly written book illustrates how the demand for servile labor, generated by the construction of the Panama Canal between 1900 and 1914, opened up opportunities for the impoverished Caribbean proletariat and marginalized peasantry to an unprecedented degree. Their engagement for the first time in a large-scale, nonagrarian enterprise with American capitalists advanced these groups’ social consciousness in ways that the plantation sector did not. The Panama project, in addition, located geographically in the heart of plantation America, sent shockwaves throughout, and small agrarian societies like Barbados were affected in fundamental ways.

Between 1905 and 1914, some 45,000 black Barbadians from a total population of no more than 200,000 departed for Panama, where they became known as the “Silvermen” in order to differentiate them from the better paid white laborers of Europe and America who were known as the “Goldmen.” This book is a pioneer attempt to analyze how this migration affected the lives of those who stayed behind, and the impact of the migrants’ money remittances on the quality of social