

in the case of education, and two examples provided by Barrancos underline these objections. For one, the alternative schools used official government textbooks; and the most important advocate of these efforts at the beginning of the century, Julio Barcos, ended up, in the 1920s, deeply involved in the extremely successful effort to expand a state-sponsored education system.

Barrancos' book reveals where we stand in our knowledge of anarchism from a sociocultural perspective. On the one hand, it offers a somewhat misleading analytical framework that overestimates anarchism's unique attributes. On the other hand, it provides the necessary information to move ahead in trying to understand both the specificity of anarchist contributions and their pertinence to a wider movement for social change. There, the ideological rhetoric might have defined boundaries, but the concrete cultural efforts mixed with each other and even dialogued with the mainstream culture.

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Amazon Conservation in the Age of Development: The Limits of Providence. By RONALD A. FORESTA. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1991. Table. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. x, 366 pp. Cloth. \$49.95.

This is contemporary environmental history at its best. Ronald A. Foresta has constructed a compelling panorama of the makers of Brazilian nature preservation policies from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s. His study evaluates the social and political forces arrayed in favor of economic development at any cost, and enlists a sympathetic understanding of the environmentalists who obstructed their path.

Foresta's narrative centers on the two most strategic figures of the period, Maria Tereza Jorge Pádua and Paulo Nogueira Neto, respectively heads of the National Park Service and the federal Special Secretariat of the Environment (SEMA). The military government they served, heedless of environmental precepts, was driven by doctrines of national security, which dictated the massive invasion of the Amazon basin so as to deny it to foreign conspirators; and of development, which advocated the fastest possible conversion of standing natural resources into raw materials for industry. Pádua and Nogueira Neto were supported by a smattering of natural scientists in universities and research centers and a scant few thousand lay, middle-class environmentalists. Ranged against them were not only bureaucratic development planners and the moneyed interests of logging, mining, and construction firms but also the Left, the church, and the advocates of Indians and backwoods peoples. For them, the forest was merely the objective of frontier land reform and the environmentalists merely dilettantes, compromised by their military connections.

Pádua was largely responsible for planning the expansion of the national park system, according to scientific principles; for signing decrees adding 20,000 square

kilometers of parks; and for developing management plans for the system as a whole. Nogueira Neto created a network of small reserves equipped for ecological research. Both managers were skilled at attracting publicity and funds from international environmental organizations, a strategy that embarrassed their own government into providing a minimal amount of resources for their projects. The dynamics of these relationships are shrewdly analyzed and placed in their political context.

Lamentably, but characteristically, these two paladins were both edged out of office. Pádua submitted her resignation in 1982, hoping thereby to persuade President João Figueiredo to reverse his decision to allow a road to be built across the Araguaia park. But Figueiredo did not find it difficult to choose between a road and a park, and Pádua was out. Nogueira Neto resigned in 1986, too closely identified with the generals whom he had cozened for years and too little interested in problems of the pollution of the urban environment, supposedly SEMA's principal concern. According to *Foresta*, the cause of Amazon preservation slumped thereafter.

But perhaps it did not. *Foresta* seems to have rung down a third-act curtain on a continuing drama whose cast and audience are constantly increasing. The agencies Pádua and Nogueira Neto directed have acquired new dynamism; the Left and environmentalists have discovered common ground for action; democratization has had, on the whole, a good effect in promoting the cause of biodiversity; the national and state governments have come to act more responsibly—now somewhat less out of embarrassment than conviction—and funding by international NGOs has generated collaboration and improved the management of reserves.

None of these developments gainsays the basic pessimism of *Foresta's* conclusions. Nature preservation in Brazil remains exceedingly precarious. There is no mistaking the hypocrisy and opportunism that inspires quite a few of those newly hired to wield the by-now imposing arsenal of environmental laws, or the incompetence and desperation at work at the ground level, negating the noblest intentions and the most scientific of plans. *Foresta's* advocacy of leaving the rest of Amazonia a wilderness annoys many of the new environmentalists, who believe that more planning and management and the presence of "traditional" indwellers will promote both development and biodiversity. Their view seems to ignore the probability that Brazilian bureaucratic culture and the interests behind it will infect the agencies charged with overseeing these contradictory goals. *Foresta's* reflective analysis merits the respectful attention of all who seek to understand the politics of environmentalism or to take up the tasks carried forward by Pádua and Nogueira Neto.

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