

The Llanos Frontier in Colombian History, 1830–1930. By JANE M. RAUSCH. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993. Illustrations. Maps. Tables. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. xii, 401 pp. Cloth. \$50.00.

In this, her second book on the eastern plains of Colombia, Jane Rausch continues to rescue that region from scholarly oblivion and popular myth. She traces out the history of the *llanos* from the aftermath of independence to the eve of the tumultuous middle decades of this century, focusing on the role of its three major subregions—Casanare, Arauca, and Meta—in the process of nation building. As the new nation veered from one crisis to another in the 1830s and 1840s, missionaries took up the slack on the eastern march. Liberal reformers after midcentury regarded the region's settlement and economic growth as a manifest destiny of sorts, but possessed neither sufficient resources nor sufficient will to achieve those goals. The nearly five decades of Conservative rule after 1886 witnessed revolts, fitful booms in rubber and egret feathers, and administrative neglect resulting in ecological disaster, disease, and disorder throughout these frontier districts.

Throughout, Rausch identifies the conjoining of concerns for territorial integrity and national integration in a region with Venezuela to the east and the populated Andean highlands on its western flank. She explains how the Colombian state, ranchers and land speculators, and the Catholic church sought, sometimes in concert and often at cross-purposes, to draw the disparate frontier zones and their peoples into the broader currents of civilization. This developmentalist narrative is a story of largely unsuccessful attempts by highland elites, officials, and foreign missionaries to build railroads, ply river routes, implant commercial agriculture, establish the rule of law, and subdue and educate both Indians and mestizo colonists who resisted progress.

Rausch's broad scope of analysis and rich documentation, however, suggest at least two alternative readings of *llanero* history. For one thing, the tantalizing glimpses of encounters between indigenous peoples and highland colonists allude to experiences of warfare, commerce, and cultural exchange akin to what the early U.S. colonial historian Richard White has called the "middle ground." The other side of the developmentalist narrative begs telling; to wit: how these negotiations and conflicts occurred and how they influenced state policy, missionary projects, and the long-term construction of *llanero* culture.

Beyond the relations between the Indians and the mestizo and white population lies the still-unwritten tale of the eastern plains as the spawning ground not only of an alternative culture but of an oppositional, plebeian politics. Rausch presents both of these essentially as obstacles in the way of development rather than developments themselves to examine on their own terms. Yet wherever bandits, squatters, and evaders of the excise tax came together—as they did in other Colombian frontier zones and elsewhere in Latin America during this period—they generated a popular liberalism: antielitist, antagonistic to the state, and frequently

insurrectionist. In the *llanos* case, this trend would ultimately, dramatically unfold during the second half of the twentieth century.

Although she keeps these alternative readings at arm's length, Rausch's meticulous archival work and careful explication should launch new scholarly studies of this much-neglected region. Perhaps inadvertently, too, this important contribution might further undermine the crumbling edifice of developmentalism long influential in Colombian historiography and enrich comparisons among regional and frontier histories elsewhere in the Americas.

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Los orígenes del reformismo militar en América Latina: la gestión de David Toro en Bolivia. By FERRAN GALLEGO. Barcelona: Promociones y Publicaciones Universitarias, 1991. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. 225 pp. Paper.

Ejército, nacionalismo, y reformismo en América Latina: la gestión de German Busch en Bolivia. By FERRAN GALLEGO. Barcelona: Promociones y Publicaciones Universitarias, 1992. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. 300 pp. Paper.

Other than the era of the 1952 revolution, no period is more significant in defining the character of twentieth-century Bolivia than that of the self-styled "military socialist" governments of David Toro and German Busch. Although it lasted only three years (1936–1939), the "military socialism" introduced by these two prominent veterans of the Chaco War ended the traditionalist politics of limited participation that had characterized Bolivian national affairs since 1880. The post-Chaco War generation, encouraged by the rhetoric and bold actions of Toro and Busch, soon turned to a class-based politics that assured the mobilization necessary for social revolution little more than a decade later.

Professor Ferran Gallego, of the Department of Modern and Contemporary History at the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, has written a detailed study of the Toro and Busch regimes that specialists will find useful for its thorough discussion of the diverse political issues of this dynamic period in Bolivian history. Nevertheless, these two volumes offer few fresh interpretive insights. Nor, despite their titles, do they sufficiently analyze the troubled internal institutional affairs of the Bolivian army in the aftermath of its humiliating defeat by Paraguay in the Chaco War.

Gallego recognizes, as Porfirio Díaz Machicado and Herbert S. Klein have in previous studies, the critical role of the Chaco War veterans' groups, such as the Legión de Excombatientes and particularly the Asociación Nacional de Excombatientes Socialistas, in shaping the policies of the Toro and Busch regimes. But the internal dynamics of these two vitally important military interest groups could have been explored in greater depth. Also needed is a comprehensive review of the pre-