

*Massacres in the Jungle: Ixcán, Guatemala, 1975–1982.* By RICARDO FALLA. Translated by JULIA HOWLAND. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. Photographs. Maps. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. xvi, 215 pp. Cloth, \$55.00. Paper, \$16.95.

At first glance, this book might look simply like a catalogue of the dead. It is much more. Ricardo Falla, a Jesuit priest trained as a social scientist, concentrates on the Ixcán in the department of El Quiché, a lowland jungle area settled by land-hungry natives from the highlands, mainly speakers of Mam, Q'anjob'al, Jakalteq, and Chuj. In the late 1960s, revolutionary guerrilla organizations arose in many parts of Guatemala to resist the right-wing, army-dominated national government. Ixcán was one area in which they were active, and settlers were trapped between the insurgents and the army. Falla, however, mostly ignores the revolutionaries, concentrating on the actions of the army and on the peasants caught in the middle.

The army, suspecting the settlers of aiding the revolutionaries, resorted to abductions, tortures, and massacres. Falla documents these through fieldwork from late 1983 and early 1984, mainly in the Mexican Lacandón forest refugee camps but eventually also in resistance groups hiding in the Guatemalan jungle. He took the name Marcos: "I am like the evangelist Mark, who spread the good news without having been a firsthand witness. Like him, I have tried to collect hundreds of testimonies, giving them an interpretive framework" (p. 8, n. 2). Falla is meticulous in his documentation, giving names, ages, places of origin, occupations, residences, and frequently kinship affiliations of persons killed or abducted. Having made a strict rule never to rely on the evidence of a single witness, he frequently collates his list with names obtained by other organizations, such as the Guatemalan Justice and Peace Committee.

The numbers mount over time: 22 named cases of abduction and torture in Ixcán Grande from 1979 to 1981; 19 men selectively massacred in 1981; 102 men, women, and children massacred in villages east of Ixcán in 1982. The scorched-earth policy culminated in the total destruction of the town of Cuarto Pueblo; 362 names of the dead are listed. Again and again, Falla insists on the importance of the names, that survivors might know what happened to family members.

Falla's religious commitment shows in his repeated use of biblical metaphors: "annuciation," "faith," "God's grace," and in passages such as the following: "Why write a book about massacres? . . . Why recall such unspeakable brutality and cruelty? The witness gives us the key. His testimony 'I shall never forget it,' uttered from the depths of his harrowing memory, states an existentially positive reality for him: that he is alive. His testimony is good news" (p. 2).

Scientific commitment shows in Falla's careful relation of what happened in Guatemala to counterrevolutionary activity in Malaysia and Vietnam, for which a considerable literature exists. He also makes recourse to studies in "disaster sociology" (responses to floods, tornados, and so on) to explain the behavior of the victims. He has an anthropologist's interest in the survivors who fled to Mexico and now live in multiethnic collective communities.

The fluently translated book contains 12 maps, captioned in Spanish, and 15 pages of photographs, but sadly, no index. A foreword by Beatriz Manz discusses the book's origin, and her epilogue brings the scene in Guatemala up to date.

BARBARA EDMONSON, Tulane University

*The Regime of Anastasio Somoza, 1936–1956.* By KNUT WALTER. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993. Photographs. Maps. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xx, 303 pp. Cloth, \$49.95. Paper, \$17.95.

Knut Walter's long-awaited study will immediately establish itself as the most comprehensive and important political history of twentieth-century Nicaragua. Indeed, for its sobriety, originality, and intelligence, Walter's finely crafted study ranks among the top analyses of Central American state formation.

Walter's narrative of the Somoza García regime (1936–56) dramatically revises the portrait of the prerevolutionary state that dominated Nicaraguan politics and scholarship during the 1980s. The book's most fundamental and provocative insight is that Somoza García built a modern state in Nicaragua that was not anomalous and that in many ways resembled others throughout the continent. Walter shows that despite the ruling family's ability to accumulate great wealth and to hold on to the reins of power for more than 40 years, the Nicaraguan state that Somoza García did so much to create had, in many ways, a life and a rationale of its own.

The main body of Walter's carefully documented study traces Somoza's rise to power, his construction of political alliances, and his state-building efforts. Walter demonstrates convincingly that Somoza's rise was based on a significant degree of political support and on a political alliance that bridged the elite divide between Liberals and Conservatives. Somoza's subsequent monetary reforms helped the shaky Nicaraguan economy navigate the rough waters of depression and war. His relative success on the economic front translated into both political support from the agro-export elite and significant expansion of state institutions that in turn were geared toward further economic development. Between 1945 and 1956, for example, government income and expenditures increased fivefold.

Walter makes the original and compelling argument that a close link existed between the expansion of the state and economy and Somoza's ability to neutralize the opposition, particularly during the peak of the anti-Somoza movement between 1944 and 1947. Somoza's efforts to augment not just the state's repressive capacity but also its capacity to deliver services to its citizens helped to create legitimacy for the Nicaraguan state. This book will force political scientists to reexamine the accepted explanations for the Sandinista victory of 1979, which posit the regime's exceptional nature as the key. Walter's careful, step-by-step retracing of Somoza's economic and state-building policies leads to his conclusion, "the Nicaraguan state during the Somoza regime represented an overall consensus among the politically