

Colombia: The Political Dimensions of Change. By ROBERT H. DIX. New Haven, 1967. YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS. Yale Studies in Political Science. Maps. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xi, 452. \$10.00.

The latest volume of the Yale Studies in Political Science is a welcome addition to the rapidly expanding body of social science literature on modernization in developing countries. The book studies the dynamics of Colombian politics and society with the aim of explaining why Colombia, out of a given number of hypothetical alternatives, took her present elite-controlled route to modernization. Contending that standard quantitative indicators do not adequately explain why Colombia "chose" the course she did, the author seeks to find the answers through a systematic analysis of selected causal factors.

According to Dix, Colombia's experiment in modernization is an outstanding case of an "effort by an elite which is substantially traditional in its origins to transform a nation within limits that will enable the ruling class to retain for itself the essential levers of power" (p. 11). Although the Conservative and Liberal parties have their roots sunk deep in the past, they nonetheless have taken the initiative in forging a national economic development program and have also managed to accommodate themselves, however uncomfortably, to the swift social change brought about by that development. Moreover, the oligarchy has accomplished this while successfully fighting off a series of assaults by non-elite groups.

Dix sets the date of Colombia's "take-off" into modernity at 1934, the year the Liberal president, Alfonso López, launched his *revolución en marcha*. Since then, Dix continues, the traditional parties have rarely strayed from the reformist precedents set by López. By undertaking a gradual transformation of Colombian society and institutions, the modernizing elite has maintained power and influence despite serious challenges from the Gaitanista movement, populist-tinged military rule, incessant rural violence, and a Communist-supported "movement of national liberation." According to the author, three principal factors account for the surprising resiliency of the Colombian oligarchy during three decades of social upheaval: the strength of traditional ties between the elite and the lower social strata, the flexibility of traditional institutions, and the inability of counterelites to sustain a prolonged and cohesive attack on the power structure.

Nevertheless, this book gives Colombian aristocrats little cause

for complacency. On the contrary, it concludes that elite-directed modernization appears "doomed to ultimate failure" (p. 399). The National Front's approach to social problems has been merely that of "palliative, paternalistic reform, designed to alleviate severe stresses in the system" (p. 389). So far the Colombian Establishment has not paid the heavy costs that have been exacted from other elites for attempting to retain their monopoly of power over a restless people. Dix concludes that if the National Front follows its present (1966) course, its ability to exercise effective authority and to direct change will steadily deteriorate. Its only hope of maintaining some measure of power is to form a much broader-based coalition and allow greater participation in the decision-making process by popular elements.

Of special interest to this reader was the chapter devoted to a detailed analysis of *la violencia*, the origins of which "arose out of the superimposition of Colombia's crisis of modernization on the patterns of the country's hereditary hatreds" (p. 360). Dix suggests that that directionless, self-defeating violence, despite its destructive effects, could well have saved the upper classes from genuine social revolution. The oligarchy is in effect living on borrowed time; if it cannot find an effective solution to the nation's basic socio-economic problems, the revolution may still come.

Scholars may quibble with some of the author's theoretical constructions, such as his typology of modernizing regimes; Colombians will undoubtedly disagree with many aspects of his diagnosis of their country's social ills; but all can profit from this excellent, coldly objective case study in the politics of modernization.

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La subversión en Colombia. Visión del cambio social en la historia.

By ORLANDO FALS BORDA. Bogotá, 1967. Ediciones Tercer Mundo. Charts. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. 293. Paper. \$2.60.

At the first confrontation between Gabriel and Lucifer, the first man and woman were ostracized from Paradise and became the first losers. Henceforth Paradise was no more. In real life, when Politics and Religion are married, and there is an attempt to divorce them, as has been the case in paradisiacal Colombia, a truly titanic clash ensues, and the loser is always the common man. This appears to be the message in *La subversión en Colombia*, by Orlando Fals Borda, published by the Institute of Latin American Studies of Columbia University. This book represents a most praiseworthy effort to ex-