

While the academic reader and the specialist will find nothing new here, the book does deserve an audience among the general public fed a heavy diet of uncritical and inaccurate anti-Castro propaganda. And those American businessmen, wealthy Cuban exiles, and CIA planners who would like to return to the days of Batista or Machado might also read it and learn that social revolutions are irreversible, that some of the positive accomplishments of the Castro government are, indeed, permanent, and that "the clock of Cuba's life cannot be set back to what it was."

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*La Violencia en Colombia; Estudio de un proceso social.* By GERMÁN GUZMÁN, ORLANDO FALS BORDA and EDUARDO UMAÑA LUNA. Bogotá, 1962. Ediciones Tercer Mundo. Maps. Illustrations. Pp. 430.

The incidence of rural bloodshed and internecine strife has been a dominant phenomenon of contemporary Colombia. In a continual exercise in futility, fighting has swept a large portion of the republic, draining its human resources while sapping its institutions. While the death toll has risen beyond 200,000, fundamental problems have been aggravated rather than ameliorated. To a set of circumstances that have received too little attention outside their country, three Colombians have directed their efforts. The resulting work, already in its second edition, has created a considerable impact there. Something in the nature of a "*J'accuse*," this essentially nonpartisan study has placed the blame upon the entire social fabric. If the work is uneven and occasionally diffuse, it is at the same time a significant addition to the study of Latin America.

Any volume drafted by three authors presents of necessity a degree of unevenness. In this instance the contributions are those of a parish priest from El Libano, a sociologist, and a lawyer. To Mons. Germán Guzmán, described in the Prologue as "the principal author," falls the responsibility for the first two-thirds of the book. Thus he has written Parts One and Two, dealing first with the history and geography of violence, then of the conflict's structural elements. Authorship of the final section, treating the sociology of violence, is rather involved. Guzmán and Fals Borda have co-authored a brief chapter on consequences of the violence; this is followed by a study of socio-juridical factors by Umaña, one hundred pages in length. The concluding chapter and Epilogue are exclusively the responsibility of Fals Borda.

This detailed explanation is a necessary preliminary to further

comment, for the uneven quality of the work is reflected in far more than stylistic inconsistencies which are, after all, of secondary interest. The two parts by Guzmán are in large part a straightforward factual account. At the outset the reader is reminded that the outbreak of rural strife antedated the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán and the resultant *bogotazo* of April, 1948. Indeed, in several regions the violence can be traced back to 1930 and the attendant change from Conservative to Liberal control of national politics.

Mons. Guzmán pursues the historical path of violence through its two periods of temporary and partial pacification in 1953 and again in 1958, adding a geographical narrative relating events to the several regions. Of interest here are brief but generally astute characterizations of the society and economy of those areas most afflicted. A peculiarity is the undoubtedly inadvertent repetition of a two-page passage. Thus the nine paragraphs on page 62 that discuss life in the *llanos* are repeated verbatim on pp. 128-29. This word-for-word repetition should be removed from future editions.

Part Two gives a variety of interesting, occasionally intriguing details about the activities and operations of the guerrillas. Drawing upon his experience as a member of the 1958 Investigating Commission on the causes of violence, Guzmán cites such items as problems of financing, of insignia and clothing, of propaganda and actual tactics, including the widespread barbarisms of many sorts. While conceding the thoroughness of his description, it should be added that several competent Colombian writers have dealt with much the same material in recent years.

The volume's greatest contribution is that of the final section. The lengthy chapter of Umaña is a detailed legalistic examination of the violence. The well-founded burden of his argument is the total inadequacy of the Colombian judicial system in dealing with contemporary conditions. He cites the failure to adjust an essentially colonial system to the realities of the twentieth century. Such problems as bureaucratic conformity, over-centralization of judicial organs, the inappropriateness of national legislation, the debilitating effects of sporadic declarations of public amnesty, and the inadequacies of both police and military units are set forth.

Perhaps the most provocative passages are the closing ones by Fals Borda. Dean of the first school of sociology in Latin America, he examines the reality of violence in properly sociological terms. The subsequent discussion has meaning beyond the boundaries of Colombia. His interpretation, couched largely in terms of functionalism, cannot with justice be detailed here. It should at least be noted, how-

ever, that he sees the Colombian aberration in large part as the high incidence of institutional dysfunction, as well as marked confusion over roles played at various levels of national life. His concluding remarks evoke precious little optimism, yet there are valid grounds for agreeing with his expectation of at least twenty more years' violence before the root causes can be transformed.

Many are the academic disciplines that have been charged with a slighting of Latin America. Yet the criticism of sociology has been largely muted thus far. One of the notable facts about this book is the use to which sociological analysis has been put. In this sense it is a pioneering effort for all serious Latin Americanists. The criticisms suggested above are not meant in a carping spirit. For if this is less than an unflawed work, it is nonetheless a major contribution deserving of close attention.

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*The People of Aritama. The Cultural Personality of a Colombian Mestizo Village.* By GERARDO and ALICIA REICHEL-DOLMATOFF. Chicago, 1961. The University of Chicago Press. Appendix. Index. Illustrations. Pp. xviii, 483. \$8.50.

The mestizo peasantry of "Aritama" (a pseudonym for a small town on the foothills of Colombia's Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta) is depicted by the distinguished anthropologists who wrote this book as a passive, food-craving, disease-fearing, and mutually invidious group in the process of integration into the wider Colombian creole culture. Aritama is located on a "cultural no-man's land" where the descendants of the ancient Tairona Indians and the champions of modern change have set up both a barrier and a battlefield. The battle is being won by the mixed-bloods, but in the meantime it is subjecting the town to a series of strains. Notably change is occurring without much disintegration; the goal is clear and the people have openly decided to become "civilized."

The authors claim that Aritama represents an earlier stage in the current of development of creole culture, defined on the basis of Gillin's *Moche*. Thus they do well in warning that Aritama is not typical of other Andean regions of Colombia where (as postulated by the present reviewer) a Hispanoid rather than a creole culture prevails. This seems to be proof of a simultaneity of subcultures in Colombia (which in fact is not surprising), or perhaps a defect of observation by field workers—anthropologists would tend to identify creole cultures, while sociologists would be prone to discover Hispanoid groups (with weak Indian cultural matrices).