

Costa Rican democracy is an important and timely addition to earlier studies.

Ameringer's previous works on the democratic left and José Figueres provide an excellent point of departure for his analytical overview of Costa Rican democracy. A particularly strong point of the study is the author's ability to synthesize a wide range of works by Costa Rican authors (such studies make up 75 percent of the bibliography). Costa Ricans have been prolific in the production of analyses reflecting the strengths and weaknesses of their political, economic, and social institutions. Ameringer effectively maintains that the very existence in Costa Rica of such a large body of concerned, critical, and reflective literature reinforces the "Tico way," or the resolution of conflict in Costa Rica "with civility and without rancor" (p. 1).

The narrative ends chronologically with the February 1982 election of President Luis Alberto Monge, the man who has the unenviable task of coping with the multiple problems afflicting Costa Rican society. Ameringer accurately anticipated that "the prospect of relief from the United States" would force Monge to adjust Costa Rican foreign policy "to the actions of the Reagan administration" (p. 122). In the same vein, the author's concern regarding the potentially damaging actions of various interest groups was more than justified, for during the first months of the Monge administration crippling strikes by such disparate elements as physicians and banana workers placed additional stress on an already overburdened nation. Perhaps the greatest challenge to Costa Rican democracy, however, will be to include the popular classes in national economic and political life. By giving Monge's party a majority in the legislature, the Costa Rican people have, in Ameringer's words, "unstuck the machinery" (p. 119) that had immobilized the previous administration. The Monge government, therefore, has an excellent opportunity to bring meaningful reform to the Costa Rican system. The study thus ends on a positive note with the author cautiously optimistic that, systemic strains notwithstanding, the "Tico way" will prevail.

In brief, *Democracy in Costa Rica* is well written, enlightening, and provocative. Anyone interested in Costa Rica would profit greatly from reading it.

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*The Dominican People, 1850–1900. Notes for a Historical Sociology.* By H. HOETINK. Translated by STEPHEN K. AULT. Baltimore: The Johns

Hopkins University Press, 1982. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. xi, 243. Cloth. \$22.50.

When it first appeared in Spanish a decade ago, this modest volume by the Dutch sociologist Harry Hoetink won swift recognition as a small marvel of synthesis. The Dominican Republic (once Santo Domingo) is so little known, its distinctive history so little appreciated, that this short study, which deals with a critical half-century—roughly, the interim between political independence from both Spain and Haiti and the mounting of United States interest, which would lead eventually to occupation—filled an important need. Now, in a thoughtful translation into English by Stephen Ault, Hoetink's book will surely win additional acclaim.

The author sees the book as an expansion of his original idea, which was to document the dismal (but perhaps inescapable) regime of Ulises Heureaux (1879–99). He also thinks of it as a step toward an eventual comparative sociology of Latin America.

The materials themselves are rich and allusive. One gets a full sense of the complex evolution of the agrarian, underpopulated, resource-rich (but infrastructurally poor) society Santo Domingo was, once the Haitians had withdrawn and Spain had lost interest, but the United States had barely begun to eye the magnificent harbor at Samaná and other goodies. In nine short chapters, the author documents change in such spheres of life as the demographic, the economic, and the political, and concludes with three particularly insightful chapters on cultural transmission, social structure, and family and daily life. The distinctiveness of a little country that shared its borders only with “the world's first Black republic”—as a seemingly unending list of writers have chosen to dub Haiti—emerges clearly. Yet the firmly Iberian, and culturally laggard, quality of the Hispanic Caribbean is revealed here as peculiarly enduring. One is tempted to wonder what Hoetink will tell us, when he eventually does compare the Dominican Republic to its hispanophone congeners (Cuba and Puerto Rico), and to other more distant lands, like Panama and Venezuela. Much of the characteristically cultural material in his concluding chapters resonates with what we already know of some of these lands, which is not surprising.

The recent influx of Dominicans to the United States; the visibility of North Americans (and of North American imperialism) in the Dominican Republic since 1965; and the critical days ahead—as the world sugar market shrinks, and economic alternatives to it become even harder than now to attain for small subtropical countries—make Hoetink's book an invaluable addition to our background understanding. Would that the *opera magna* of some authors were as enlightening as Hoetink's “notes”!