CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE 1980S: Recent Descriptions and Prescriptions

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THE MORASS: UNITED STATES INTERVENTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA. By RICHARD ALAN WHITE. (New York: Harper and Row, 1984. Pp. 319. $14.95 cloth, $6.95 paper.)

UNDER THE EAGLE: U.S. INTERVENTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. By JENNY PEARCE. (Boston: South End Press, 1982. Pp. 295. $7.50.)

FEAR AND HOPE: TOWARD POLITICAL DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL AMERICA. By PENNY LERNOUX. (New York: The Field Foundation, 1984. Pp. 46. Out of print.)

TROUBLE IN OUR BACKYARD: CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE EIGHTIES. Edited by MARTIN DISKIN. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983. Pp. 264. $9.95.)

CENTRAL AMERICA: CRISIS AND ADAPTATION. Edited by STEVE C. ROPP and JAMES A. MORRIS. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984. Pp. 311. $22.50 cloth, $10.95 paper.)

REVOLUTION AND COUNTERREVOLUTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. Edited by DONALD E. SCHULZ and DOUGLAS H. GRAHAM. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984. Pp. 555. $35.00 cloth, $14.95 paper.)

THE UNITED STATES AND CENTRAL AMERICA, 1944–1949: PERCEPTIONS OF POLITICAL DYNAMICS. By THOMAS M. LEONARD. (University: University of Alabama Press, 1984. Pp. 215. $21.75.)

"Political conflict, civil war, and revolution," writes Mark Rosenberg, "have done for Central America what years of poverty, deprivation, and authoritarianism could not: They have placed it squarely on the agenda of important U.S. foreign policy interests" (*Revolution and Counterrevolution in Central America*, p. 331). One might add that these events have also created an unprecedented demand for information on the region, its contemporary crisis, and its relationship with the United States. Not too many years ago, it was almost impossible to find report-

ing or analysis in English on Central American affairs. Today it is almost impossible to keep up with the outpouring of books and periodical articles. Academic specialists, many new to the field, along with journalists, clergy, politicians, and activists, have all contributed to this rapid expansion. Some of the new work is profound; much is trivial. A remarkable amount is politically committed against current U.S. policy. Although the number of titles now available is indeed impressive, there is in fact a good deal of incest in all of this writing. The same authors appear again and again in collected works, different authors cite the same sources and each other, and a tendency exists to parrot formulas and slogans in lieu of original analysis.

The sample of recent literature on Central America reviewed here is fairly representative of the lot in including both the profound and the trivial. On the whole, however, the sample reveals that a good deal of sound thinking is going on. Unfortunately, in spite of the authors' almost universally expressed hope, it seems to be having little impact on public policy.

With the exception of the fine historical surveys by Walter LaFeber and Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., few truly ambitious attempts have been made at integrated analysis of the Central American crisis as a whole.[1] One such work is Richard Alan White's *The Morass: United States Intervention in Central America*. As the title implies, White belongs to what can be called the "another Vietnam" school of critics of current policy. *The Morass* examines the historical development of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine and its current application in Central America. White emphasizes the centrality of both repression and reform to the doctrine and thus calls attention to the real counterinsurgency role of land reform, military civic action programs, and "free" elections. The original architects of counterinsurgency in Southeast Asia considered such reforms as means rather than ends. Their purpose was to win the "hearts and minds" of the local inhabitants, thus denying their support to the guerrillas. Reform alone could not defeat the insurgency, of course; its necessary partner was repression. Because of the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of effecting structural reforms amidst the turmoil of civil war (whether in Vietnam or El Salvador), it became necessary to rely more and more on the repressive side of counterinsurgency.

White identifies March 1980 as the moment at which, compelled by the logic of events, the United States began to opt definitively for the repressive way in El Salvador. Reformism reached its peak that month with the nationalization of the banking system and foreign commerce and the promulgation of the agrarian reform decree. At the same time, the second junta collapsed because of the civilian members' outrage at increasing human rights violations by the armed forces. Matters worsened when José Napoleón Duarte's decision to join the third junta pre-

cipitated a serious split in the Christian Democratic Party, which the Carter administration regarded as the best hope for a centrist solution. Toward the end of the month, right-wing gunmen assassinated Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero of San Salvador, the country's most respected spokesman for reason and justice.

These events, according to White, marked the "utter failure of the U.S. experiment to control social change in El Salvador" (p. 135). After that, military means were increasingly emphasized. In April the U.S. Congress restored military aid to El Salvador. Encouraged by this development, conservative Salvadoran officers purged their moderate colleagues and unleashed a frightening campaign of terror in the countryside. The murders of four North American churchwomen in December 1980 and two AID land reform experts in January 1981 made it clear that not even U.S. citizens were immune to the lethal attentions of the repressive apparatus. "Then," White concludes, "President Reagan took office and things got really bad" (p. 137).

Particularly chilling is White's discussion of the structural relationship between counterinsurgency and "death squad" activity. He views civilian massacres and disappearances, whose roots he provocatively traces to the Nazi practice of relegating troublesome individuals to *Nacht und Nebel*, as counterterror tactics designed to "neutralize" the guerrillas' indigenous support infrastructure. If this interpretation is correct, it has serious implications for the ongoing domestic debate over U.S. policy, for it means that Congressional "human rights" restrictions on military aid are absurd because violations of human rights are necessary to the successful prosecution of counterinsurgency warfare. On this point, however, White appears to allow polemical intent priority over scholarly caution. Following a discussion of the CIA's well-documented participation in Operation Phoenix in Vietnam (a "neutralization" program that cost the lives of some thirty thousand civilians, many of whom had no connection with the Viet Cong), White admits that no hard evidence exists of CIA involvement in similar activities in El Salvador. He nevertheless concludes that the absence of a documented link "matters little" (p. 43) and proceeds to include a discussion of "extrajudicial executions" in El Salvador in his chapter on "The Role of the CIA." Another dubious aspect of this same discussion is White's use of imperfect statistics to demonstrate the place of assassinations, massacres, and disappearances in an overall counterinsurgency strategy.[2]

Although White is critical of the Reagan administration's Central American policy, he does not believe that things would have been better had Jimmy Carter remained in office. On the contrary, he makes the important point that, on the whole, both "liberals" and "conservatives" believe the United States may and even should intervene to block radi-

cal revolution in Central America. The essential debate between the two positions involves only the balance between reform and repression, a balance that had begun to shift toward the latter even before Reagan took office.

Broader in scope and different in emphasis is another book-length critique of U.S. involvement in the region, *Under the Eagle: U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean* by Jenny Pearce. Originally published in Great Britain by the Latin American Bureau in 1981, the edition at hand is an updated version issued in the United States the following year. Pearce begins her study with the Monroe Doctrine and embraces as her area of coverage not only the Central American isthmus but also the islands of the Caribbean. Whereas White stresses ideological motives and military doctrine, Pearce employs an "economic dependency" perspective to analyze the important role of transnational corporations and the economic motives for intervention. Her account is extremely detailed and its wealth of anecdotal material will delight anyone in search of gems for classroom lectures or soapbox appearances. Unfortunately, Pearce cites few sources for her many tales and assertions. Instead of footnotes, she provides brief bibliographical essays at the end of the book. A list of useful addresses rounds out what is really an activist's handbook on the region.

Critics of any policy may certainly expect listeners to ask what alternative they would recommend. With regard to U.S. policy in Central America, the most popular answer seems to be "negotiations" of some sort. White calls for a diplomatic approach to head off what he fears will become a regionalized war from which the United States will not easily extricate itself. Even Pearce endorses the idea of talks, although (presumably because of her determinist approach) she otherwise shows little interest in policy prescriptions.

In her brief essay entitled *Fear and Hope: Toward Political Democracy in Central America*, journalist Penny Lernoux deliberately departs from the current polemical vogue of reciting the "long history of suffering by the Central American masses as well as frequent errors by U.S. administrations" to turn her attention directly to the question of what can be done "to foster democratic growth in Central America" (p. 6). She believes that the promotion of "democracy" is properly the mission of the United States but that Washington is going about it in the wrong way. In order to promote constructive change in Central America, Lernoux argues, the United States must have knowledge, understanding, and patience—qualities, one might add, that have heretofore been in notably short supply. In particular, Washington must understand and become tolerant of cultural diversity. Latin Americans, according to Lernoux, wish simply to be themselves. A long history of foreign domination has denied them this basic right and left them with "the half-

finished copies of liberalism, capitalism, and communism, all with major flaws, that we find in the region" (p. 7). Thus it is nationalism, much more than Marxism, that is "the historical bearer of change in Latin America and elsewhere in the Third World" (p. 10). Once Washington comprehends that the refusal to be a client is not the same thing as being an enemy, then the U.S. government can mend its ways and become part of the solution rather than the problem.

Having accomplished this improbable conversion and become benignly tolerant of change and diversity, Washington must then seek to promote democracy, not by imposing exotic institutions at the national level, but by looking to indigenous, "grass-roots" democratic traditions. According to Lernoux, trade unions, peasant federations, church communities, and other popular organizations provide the necessary basis for successful political parties, and the United States should encourage their growth rather than obstruct it. Such movements, she urges, "must be allowed to develop on their own, even if they lead to the emergence of political and economic systems different from our own. Form is less important than content, for there are many different paths to a democratic society" (pp. 9–10).

As noble as Lernoux's vision may be, it is unlikely to be realized as long as the region remains at war and the United States continues to seek a military solution. Lernoux recognizes this problem and urges the establishment of peace as a necessary prerequisite for any improvement of life in Central America. She attacks the Kissinger Commission's report for its proposal to pursue both economic and military objectives simultaneously. Not only does economic aid in wartime tend to be used for military purposes (a point Richard Alan White also makes effectively), but Central American armies and their officers are also obstacles to democratic development. To build up military establishments, Lernoux concludes, is to thwart the spread of democracy at the grass roots.

Lernoux is certainly aware that the achievement of peace in the region will not be an easy task, short of a clear military victory by one side or the other, which in either case would have the undesirable result of strengthening military dominance. She does offer a plan, however, one resembling in many particulars others recently proposed.[3]

Lernoux's scheme would require nonaggression pacts among all the major actors in the region and the dispatch of peacekeeping forces to patrol frontiers and maintain a cease-fire in El Salvador. Even apart from the fact that such a settlement would demand a complete reversal of U.S. policy, including an end to the CIA-sponsored Contra war against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua and the normalization of relations with Cuba, there seems little ground for regarding the plan with optimism. One wonders if even the threat of withholding U.S. aid would suffice to make the Salvadoran military accept "power sharing"

with the left or the integration of guerrilla units into the established armed forces. One also wonders whether it would in fact be possible "to bring to trial those accused of the torture and murder of civilians" in order "to isolate the most intransigent members of both groups [the army and the guerrillas]" (p. 19). Lernoux suggests it can be done, citing the example of the trials the Alfonsín government recently conducted in Argentina. It is interesting to speculate, however, on how the United States might react to "a system of impartial courts" (apparently to be based on the Nuremberg model) in light of recent suggestions of U.S. involvement in, or at least inspiration of, assassination and "counterterror" activities (*The Morass*, 102–3).[4]

Much of the recent literature on Central America has appeared in the form of multi-author works.[5] Most are critical of Washington's role in the region and most aspire to contribute to the policy debate, although the majority probably end by preaching to the converted. Some of these recent collaborative works appear hastily assembled for a nonspecialist audience, while others show greater forethought and seem intended for academic consumption. Somewhat exemplifying the former variety is *Trouble in Our Backyard*, edited by Martin Diskin. Complete with a rather flip foreword by John Womack, Jr., and an epilogue by German novelist Günter Grass (a romantic celebration of Sandinismo and Polish Solidarity as two movements with common goals), this anthology is meant "to correct . . . false impressions and to promote public awareness so that perhaps policy may, in time, reflect knowledge rather than convenience or arrogance" (p. xxxiv).

The book's lack of unity, however, muddles its message. Some of the contributions have appeared elsewhere and thus embody different approaches and assumptions about the audience being addressed. General readers, for example, will find Edelberto Torres Rivas's involved "dependency" analysis of the social and economic roots of the contemporary crisis rather difficult. Others may wonder about the adequacy of Womack's assertion that a victory of the left in Central America "would not result in socialism, which no major force on the Central American Left has . . . on its agenda" (p. xiii), when considered as a preface to Richard Fagen's thoughtful and sympathetic reportage precisely on efforts to build socialism in revolutionary Nicaragua.

Readers willing to overlook the forest and concentrate on the trees will nevertheless find a group of rewarding individual essays. In addition to the Torres Rivas and Fagen pieces are excellent accounts by Shelton Davis and Lars Schoultz of recent developments in Guatemala (the horror story that seldom makes the evening news), an essay on Honduras by Steven Volk, and one on Ronald Reagan by Luis Maira, who is rapidly gaining recognition as one of the most perceptive Latin observers of North American affairs. Tommie Sue Montgomery's contri-

bution offers an excellent overview of the post-Medellín Catholic Church in Central America, with a brief informative glimpse of Protestant activities. Montgomery does much to clarify some troublesome points, especially with regard to the question of church-state relations in Sandinista Nicaragua and the quarrel between Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo and the so-called popular church.

Enrique Baloyra updates and expands his earlier analysis of the Salvadoran oligarchy and the "disloyal right."[6] In a complicated argument rather heavily informed by theoretical considerations, Baloyra offers the daring thesis that the crisis and realignments of 1979–80 actually broke the power of the Salvadoran oligarchy, leaving intact only its ideology, which in the hands of rightist demagogue Roberto D'Aubuisson has continued to be a powerful force for resisting change. Baloyra's account ends in mid-1983, when D'Aubuisson was still in power. It would be interesting for Baloyra to develop his argument further in light of more recent events, specifically, José Napoleón Duarte's election to the presidency in 1984 and the establishment of a Christian Democratic majority in the legislature in 1985.

In *Central America: Crisis and Adaptation*, editors Steve Ropp and James Morris declare their purpose to be essentially the same as that of Diskin—to meet the "need for better understanding . . . that can inform public debate as to the course we [the United States] should pursue in the region" (p. xx). The volume consists of six separate country studies, plus an introduction and conclusion by the editors. Ropp and Morris have sought to overcome a frequent weakness of such projects by attempting to establish a common theme among the essays. As implied by the subtitle, each contributor's task is to define the nature of the crisis as it pertains to the particular country under discussion and to assess the extent to which the current regime has succeeded or failed in adapting to it and why.

The unity achieved by this device is largely superficial. Some of the essays, specifically those by the late Stephen Gorman on Nicaragua, John Booth on Costa Rica, and Steve Ropp on Panama, stress the application of various theoretical models to the cases at hand while the others are more straightforwardly empirical. Gorman usefully emphasized the uniqueness of the Nicaraguan case in his attempt to explain the genesis of radical revolution in that country, and he questioned the applicability of the Sandinista experience to neighboring countries, even those (like Guatemala and El Salvador) that seem manifestly on the verge of exploding. J. C. Cambranes, the only Central American and historian among the contributors (the rest are North American political scientists), takes a Marxist approach well-grounded in the extensive archival research he has done for his monumental study of the coffee industry in Guatemala.[7] He traces the crisis in Guatemala to the

displacement of peasant cultivators from the land by the expansion of export agriculture beginning in the late nineteenth century.

In discussing El Salvador, Tommie Sue Montgomery focuses her essay on the major political actors and their historical development.[8] Montgomery suggests interestingly that the growth of the Salvadoran state has given the army increasing autonomy from its erstwhile partner in dominion, the oligarchy. This trend has held especially since 1980 because of the nationalization of the banks and export trade and the increase in military aid from the United States. Although this situation would appear to support Baloyra's notion of a diminished oligarchy, Montgomery sees no solution short of a rebel victory, unlike Baloyra. Only U.S. assistance prevents such a triumph; without such aid, the regime is doomed.

The Booth essay on Costa Rica and James Morris's chapter on Honduras provide good overviews of the impact of the contemporary crisis on two countries frequently overlooked because of their comparative tranquility. Both are under substantial pressure, especially from the Reagan administration to militarize, and they may well experience dramatic (and not necessarily desirable) changes before the close of the 1980s.

In a concluding chapter, the editors stress that each country is different. On one hand, they claim that Guatemala and El Salvador are experiencing "crises of the state," that is, their entire political, social, and economic systems are in danger of collapsing. Honduras, Costa Rica, and Panama, on the other hand, are suffering in varying degrees "crises of regime," meaning that although the precise set of power relationships currently in force may not survive, the basic structure of society is likely to endure. By way of policy prescription, Ropp and Morris recommend a "country-specific" approach that would write off as terminal cases those nations suffering crises of the state while taking positive steps to moderate the impact of regime crises elsewhere. It is interesting that the editors are reluctant to classify the case of Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan Revolution may actually have been simply a regime crisis that the Frente Sandinista has sought (unsuccessfully to date) to magnify into a crisis of the state. Should this be so, they suggest, the revolutionary regime may itself prove ultimately unable to adapt and may suffer a crisis of its own.

The most substantial and thought-provoking of the three collections under discussion here is that compiled by Donald Schulz and Douglas Graham, *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Central America and the Caribbean*. Concerned individuals on all sides of the issue should read it carefully. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that many will, given its formidable length (more than five hundred pages) and its unattractive physical presentation (printed from "camera-ready" single-spaced type-

written copy). The crustily independent nature of several of the contributions gives this book both strength and individuality. "The crisis in the Caribbean Basin cannot be summed up in a slogan," the editors declare early on. "It is necessary to recognize that the standard ideologies—conservative, liberal, and radical—have failed to provide an adequate frame of reference. . . . [A]ll contain important insights, as well as significant limitations" (p. xiii). Throughout the work, the editors and contributors show themselves willing to challenge many of the most sacred shibboleths of both the left and the right.

Coeditor Donald Schulz is also the major contributor, responsible for three fine essays. His seventy-nine-page tour de force on El Salvador is one of the best recent treatments of that country. In his important introductory piece, "Ten Theories in Search of Central American Reality," Schulz argues in favor of the frequently contested authenticity of the documentary evidence presented in support of the U.S. State Department's 1981 white paper on El Salvador. "The desire to discredit the administration's position," he says, "has led to serious perceptual distortions and a tendency to minimize or deny foreign communist complicity. . . . It would appear that, to those with a psychological investment in disbelief, reason and evidence are irrelevant" (p. 37). Nevertheless, Schulz is no court academic of the sort dismissed by Martin Diskin as "cheerleaders" (p. xxiv). Precisely the strongest point in the documents' favor, Schulz argues, is that they do *not* fully support the Reagan thesis of a causal role for outside interference. Instead, the materials show the Salvadoran guerrillas to have found both the Soviets and the Nicaraguans to be reluctant and parsimonious in their support. "An expert forger," Schulz does concede, "might inject such contradictions into the documents to throw off the wary critic. The Reagan administration, however, is not noted for its subtlety" (p. 37).

The Schulz and Graham volume is divided into three parts. The first is devoted to essays examining certain aspects of the contemporary situation at a regional level. Penny Lernoux's contribution on the role of the church makes a fine complement to Montgomery's essay in the Diskin volume. The second part of *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Central America and the Caribbean* consists of country studies. Particularly rewarding, in addition to Schulz on El Salvador, are Gordon Bowen on Guatemala and Mark Rosenberg on Honduras. Carl Stone's essay on Jamaica provides the only substantiation of the claim by the volume's title to embrace both Central America and the Caribbean.

One relatively unusual attraction of this collection is its third part entitled "International Dimensions of the Crisis." Dennis Hanratty's essay on Mexican policy contains little that is new but provides an invaluable service by assembling it all in one place.[9] Hanratty concludes wisely that the United States might well find its interests better served

in the long run by supporting Mexican initiatives in Central America than by opposing them.

In a provocative essay on the Soviet Union and Cuba, Robert Leiken declares that by 1975 the Cuban Revolution had achieved only "a new kind of neocolonial structural dependency" (p. 458). Cuba became a servile proxy through which the Soviets could pursue their policy goals in Latin America while maintaining a low profile. These goals, Leiken argues, have differed over time and according to the country involved. Generally, Moscow has coveted normal commercial relations with the more important countries (Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia) but has also been willing, at least since 1979, to support revolutions in smaller Caribbean countries of strategic importance to the United States.

According to Leiken, neither the Cuban nor the Soviet system can support massive programs of economic transformation and development. For this reason, the Soviets have deemphasized the economic side of revolution, encouraging new client states to retain their private sectors and rely upon the West for assistance, credits, and technology. For its part, Moscow is interested primarily in developing ruling parties, armies, and internal security apparati—areas where it possesses useful techniques and materiel to offer and where it can most cheaply purchase the advantages of alignment.

While Leiken's views will no doubt annoy many on the left, they can offer little comfort to supporters of current U.S. policy. He criticizes the Reagan administration for failing to take proper advantage of growing regional opposition to Cuban-Soviet influence, not only among the other Latin American countries but also within the various leftist movements themselves. Latin American governments call for broad alliances and tolerance of change and diversity while Washington still practices "backyardism," insisting on the preservation of hegemony and thereby forcing nationalist movements into the camp of the other superpower.

Editor Schulz names this short-sighted policy the "Kirkpatrick option," after former United Nations Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, and he maintains a running debate with her peculiar interpretations of Latin American reality (p. 44). In his closing essay, Schulz outlines a peace plan similar to that proposed by Lernoux and notes that "the United States must be ready to support a wide range of regimes, from conservatives to Marxists and authoritarians to democrats." President Reagan is in an excellent position to effect such a dramatic change in policy, as was Richard Nixon in the case of China, because of his strong domestic political position and his unquestioned anticommunism. Schulz does not believe, however, that there is any realistic chance Reagan will do so.

Concern with the contemporary crisis in Central America has

also drawn scholarly attention to previous U.S. experiences with change in the region. The year 1982, for example, saw two major works appear on the CIA-organized overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz's reformist government in Guatemala.[10] By the time Arbenz fell in 1954, Cold War concerns had become predominant in formulating North American policy toward the region. But as Thomas Leonard demonstrates in *The United States and Central America, 1944–1949*, a study thoroughly researched in State Department papers, this attitude took some time to evolve in the years immediately following the end of World War II. The period in question, like the present, was one characterized by great pressure for political and social change on the isthmus. Two dictators considered friendly to the United States, Jorge Ubico in Guatemala and Maximiliano Hernández Martínez in El Salvador, fell in 1944. Two others, Anastasio Somoza García in Nicaragua and Tiburcio Carías Andino in Honduras, successfully resisted attempts to remove them from power. Finally, normally democratic and quiescent Costa Rica exploded into open civil war in 1948.

According to Leonard, the United States largely discounted the importance of this turmoil, being more concerned with events in Europe and Asia. Washington regarded the expansion of Communism as a threat external to the Americas and chose to deal with it through regional security arrangements such as the Rio Treaty and the Organization of American States. At least until the end of 1947, policymakers in the United States regarded such Communists as did exist in Central America as "local in nature and not linked to Moscow" (p. 13). A widespread conviction existed among U.S. State Department personnel that popular demands for political rights and social justice were legitimate. Consequently, there was also skepticism toward local dictators' appeals for protection against Communist takeover.

An unfortunate lack of clear topical focus weakens Leonard's otherwise instructive examination of U.S. Central American policy during a key period. In spite of the book's subtitle, *Perceptions of Political Dynamics*, the reader is never certain whether Leonard's chief concern is the perceptions or the dynamics themselves. Leonard provides a useful biographical appendix of State Department functionaries, both in Washington and the field, whose reports and assessments form the principal documentary basis for his study. But he makes no attempt in the text to establish any relationship between personal experience and the quality of reporting, other than sporadic anecdotal references to foreign service background and amount of time on station. What is more, he leaves vague the link between reporting and the actual formulation of policy.

It is also unfortunate that Leonard's book contains many minor, but annoying, errors. Proper names, especially those of Central Ameri-

cans, are misspelled and incorrectly accented throughout. Major personalities are misidentified. Leonard refers to the paladin of Nicaraguan nationalism as Augusto *P.* Sandino (p. 6) and once describes Pablo Neruda (who visited Guatemala to lecture during the Arévalo years) as a Salvadoran Communist (p. 87). Such carelessness creates the impression (whether true or not) of a book rushed into print to exploit the commercial possibilities offered by the contemporary demand for information on Central America.

These criticisms aside, Leonard's work has real strengths. Its rich narrative detail will be of enduring value to future specialists. Also important is its stress on the informational basis of policymaking. Decisions made in Washington can be only as good as the factual and interpretive reporting upon which they are based. For this reason, it is genuinely alarming to see an administration deliberately structure its advisory apparatus to coincide not with the need for objective analysis of regional realities but with preconceived ideological notions. From the vindictive sacking of "liberal" ambassadors, such as Robert E. White (San Salvador) and Lawrence Pezzullo (Managua), and the public disavowal of even "conservative" ambassadors, such as Deane R. Hinton (San Salvador again), when they speak out of turn, to the political stacking of the so-called Kissinger Commission, the Reagan administration has given every appearance, as the old jest has it, of not wishing to be confused with facts once it has made up its mind.

NOTES

1. Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*, expanded ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984); and Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., *Central America: A Nation Divided*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).
2. In the text, White states simply that this form of repression "is almost totally directed at the working classes (86.5 percent of the victims) and particularly at the rural population, which makes up 75 percent of the dead" (p. 45). But in a tiny footnote to the accompanying table (p. 44), White concedes that these figures, obtained from the Archdiocese of San Salvador, represent only those cases left after the exclusion of all those whose occupation is either unknown or falls into "marginal categories such as merchants, journalists, etc." The number of cases excluded from the count can in fact be quite high, reaching almost half (48.2 percent) for 1981 and almost three-fourths (72 percent) for 1982. The objection here is not that White is necessarily wrong about the role of the death squads and civilian massacres by regular troops—sadly, he is probably closer to the mark than not, and he is probably also correct when he speaks of the ultimate "ineffectiveness of this barbaric counterinsurgency tactic" (p. 45). My objection is that in playing games with the numbers, he is creating a false impression of precision that, once appreciated, wrests some force from his own skillful critique of the Reagan administration's misuse of figures to obscure the distribution of monies between economic and military assistance (pp. 233–39).
3. See "Dissent Paper on El Salvador and Central America," a mimeographed paper circulated in late 1980 that allegedly originated among analysts in the State Department or the CIA or both; Piero Gleijeses, "The Case for Power Sharing in El Salvador," *Foreign Affairs* 61 (Summer 1983):1048–63; and Donald E. Schulz, "Postscript:

Toward a New Central American Policy," in the Schulz and Graham volume reviewed here. Lernoux's *Fear and Hope* is already out of print.

4. There was a minor domestic flap over this issue during the 1984 presidential campaign. The CIA's controversial Nicaragua manual has since been published as *Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare*, with essays by Joanne Omang and Aryeh Neier (New York: Vintage Books, 1985).
5. In addition to those reviewed here, other collaborative works include *El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War*, edited by Marvin E. Gettleman, Patrick Lacefield, Louis Menashe, David Mermelstein, and Ronald Radosh (New York: Grove Press, 1981); *Guatemala in Rebellion: Unfinished History*, edited by Jonathan L. Fried and Marvin E. Gettleman (New York: Grove Press, 1983); *Nicaragua in Revolution*, edited by Thomas W. Walker (New York: Praeger, 1982); *Central America: International Dimensions of the Crisis*, edited by Richard E. Feinberg (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982); *Central America and the Western Alliance*, edited by Joseph Cirincione (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985). There are many others.
6. Enrique Baloyra, *El Salvador in Transition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).
7. J. C. Cambranes, *Coffee and Peasants: The Origins of the Modern Plantation Economy in Guatemala, 1853–1897* (Stockholm: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1985). Two further volumes are to appear, bringing the story down to the present crisis.
8. Montgomery's chapter incorporates material from 1983 not to be found in her *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982) but otherwise follows the book's general line of argument.
9. Hanratty's essay complements nicely the relevant essays in *The Future of Central America: Policy Choices for the U.S. and Mexico*, edited by Richard R. Fagen and Olga Pellicer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983).
10. Richard H. Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982); and Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1982).