

(not by Rodríguez) only as one more sign of the degeneracy of Spain.

A superficial but nagging defect that runs through much of the book is the promiscuous use of the words "liberal" and "conservative." As applied, they make little sense. And I doubt seriously that liberalism is a deep-rooted force in Central America, especially if the implication is that it is a strong force. Early in the book, Professor Rodríguez writes that the political community is restricted largely to white families (three percent in Guatemala) and that their purpose has been and remains that of "keeping the lower classes in their place by all forms of discrimination, some not so subtle." The least subtle tactic has been dictatorship. Writing in 1935, when hope still offset the bitterness and frustration that have blighted an excellent mind, Juan José Arévalo stated bluntly that the social structure of Central American was "primitive" (he even had the temerity to call it "retarded") and that the five republics were the most backward on the planet earth. All this is not to deny the existence of the sophisticated doctrine of liberalism. But liberalism has existed largely in fancy, and its roots will not run deep in a society that labels illiterate up to seventy percent of its members.

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The Puerto Ricans. Strangers—Then Neighbors. By CLARENCE SENIOR. Chicago, 1965. Quadrangle Books, Inc. Illustrations. Tables. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 128. \$3.50.

Spanish Harlem. By PATRICIA CAYO SEXTON. New York, 1965. Harper & Row. Map. Notes. Appendix. Index. Pp. 208. \$4.95.

Specialists in Latin America sometimes confess to acute embarrassment when called upon to deal with persons from their area of interest who have casually turned up, sometimes in great numbers, in a neighborhood just a couple of blocks away from the ivory towers of learning of Los Angeles, Houston, Miami, or New York. Here are two excellent books, each with a decidedly different approach to the same subject: the Spanish-speaking immigrant, principally in New York City. Both go a long way toward dispelling our confusion and embarrassment and even awaken a deep admiration for the Latin, who seems to lose his fascination to some people as he moves north.

Clarence Senior, whose studies on the West Indian immigrant, both Puerto Rican and Jamaican, and a Mexican agrarian reform community are fairly well known, approaches his subject in a simple, conventional manner but ends up with a provocative and profound

analysis of the newcomer which presents an irrefutable case for his acceptance as a neighbor. As a nation of immigrants we would do well to learn from our past experiences and take advantage of the benefits offered by these new strangers to our land. Senior cites statistical studies to show that this group is better educated, better trained, more disposed to integrate, and more socially stable than many of the other groups which we have absorbed into our society. Unless irreparably warped by discrimination, the ghetto, or the exploiters of organized crime, they will make the adjustment in two generations instead of the usual three. The achievements of even the first generation are truly impressive, as a casual look at the arts will indicate.

Two points raised by the author left me with the desire for further exploration. The relations between the Negro and the Puerto Rican are much more troubled and dangerous than Senior implies, although he has accurately described the background of this relationship. In spite of the many difficult problems of adjustment which the Puerto Rican must face, it is upon him (and we might also add the white) and not the Negro that the burden of eliminating the source of trouble or friction rests. The Puerto Rican, coming from an island where racial prejudice as practiced in the United States is relatively unknown, has a greater opportunity for positive action than the white, who must correct his prejudiced attitude. And yet, contrary to Senior's optimism, personal experience in Harlem and among Puerto Rican immigrants makes me pessimistic and disturbed by the reluctance of the Puerto Rican and his leaders to take the initiative in this area, where they could make a major contribution to solving one of our serious national problems.

The other point concerns the pace and thoroughness of assimilation into the North American society. Is not the majority under some obligation to protect the cultural or social contributions of the migrant rather than expect him to submit to ruthless obliteration of his cultural past? Senior touches on this subject, of course, but I feel that he could be more critical of the majority's conduct and perhaps encourage retention of some cultural traits, such as a more stable family life or the absence of racial prejudice.

Professor Sexton of New York University looks beyond the immigrant to the barrio, Spanish Harlem, which has become the largest Spanish-speaking community in the United States. The author has not been content with a mere description of the schools, churches, settlement houses, labor organizations, political groups, and government agencies which operate in the community but goes much further

and evaluates the relationship to and the achievements or failures of each of these institutions in the community. In the process she captures the warmth, the vitality, the passion, the pity, and the shame of one of the nation's worst slums.

The author offers no easy formula for slum clearance, but her keen insight into the problems of the community should be highly useful to all members of the institutions whose role in the community she has examined. One of her most disturbing conclusions is that modern new apartment buildings, while solving some hygienic problems, create serious rifts in the spirit of the community which prevent it from curing other social ills.

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Stratification in Grenada. By M. G. Smith. Berkeley, 1965. University of California Press. Figures. Tables. Notes. Index. Pp. 271. \$7.00.

This volume is closely related to Professor Smith's other recent work on the Caribbean. In contrast to the personal account in *Dark Puritan* and the broader range over time and space in *The Plural Society in the British West Indies*, it represents the most rigorous kind of sociometric analysis of a narrow topic. The subject is stratification within the small Grenadan "planter class"—the elite group of the island. The field work was done in 1952-53, following the serious disturbances which began in 1951 and were still in progress at the time. It is, therefore, set at a crucial period of transition between two forms of political life. Nevertheless, the movement of society and politics at the time is subordinated to static mathematical analysis. It might seem to hold little interest for historians, but this is not the case, for Professor Smith's theoretical concern is much broader than his narrow subject. He takes his point of departure from the implicit conflict between the concept of "plural society," as originated by J. S. Furnivall, and the general theory of social action. His conclusion that Grenada constitutes a decided exception to the general theory is supported here by hard evidence and suggests that the same may well be true for the whole range of plural societies in tropical America. The book, therefore, is of some importance to historians who wish to understand the place of tropical America in the broader sweep of human experience.

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