

*Historia e ideología de los Demócratas Cristianos venezolanos.* By J. E. RIVERA OVIEDO. Caracas, 1969. Privately printed. Illustrations. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. 248. Paper.

For the past decade students of Venezuelan politics have devoted preponderant attention to the long-dominant Acción Democrática (AD). North Americans such as Edwin Lieuwen, Robert J. Alexander, and the present reviewer have examined at considerable length the history, program, and organization of that party. Venezuelans themselves have shown the same proclivity to emphasize the AD, its leadership, and its administrative activities. If some suspected that scholars had tilted the balance, the victory of the Christian Democratic COPEI in 1968 and the subsequent inauguration of Dr. Rafael Caldera as president made this generally apparent. José Elías Rivera Oviedo has now provided at least a partial remedy. While his study may not be definitive, it is nonetheless most useful in helping to fill this obvious lacuna in the literature.

An admitted admirer of COPEI, the author received his law degree in 1965 and later attended the University of Notre Dame. His master's thesis there comprises the bulk of the present work. Roughly two-thirds represent a chronological survey of the party's growth, from its inception through the 1959-1964 collaboration with the government of Rómulo Betancourt. Although there are apt references to *copeyano* documents and policy statements through the years, by and large the narrative of events is familiar to those already well informed about Venezuelan politics. Perhaps the most interesting passages are those describing the Unión Nacional Estudiantil (UNE), which in 1936 broke away from the existing student federation over issues of religion and politics, providing the nucleus of what was later to become COPEI.

In many ways, the most suggestive sections are those on party organization and ideology which conclude the book. Drawing extensively on *copeyano* publications, Rivera Oviedo sets forth clearly the internal structure of the party. There is relatively little analysis of the actual dynamics of the organization, although he does elaborate briefly on vertical and horizontal characteristics, "resulting in a mixed organizational system" (p. 202). The author's treatment of party ideology is less political than philosophical. The reader will not learn much about the concrete policies which he may expect from a *copeyano* government, but he will come to understand the philosophical bases from which the party emerged and developed.

To summarize, the author has provided a fine introduction for those concerned with Venezuelan Christian Democracy. This becomes especially significant today, with the Caldera government in power, committed to policies of economic development and social justice in one of the hemisphere's most important republics. If Rivera Oviedo does not tell a great deal about the internal workings of the party, he prepares the way for such an investigation. This he quite rightly recognizes in his concluding words: "It is hoped that our analysis may serve as a point of departure for later studies of Venezuelan Christian Democracy." He himself would seem an appropriate candidate to undertake the task.

University of North Carolina

JOHN D. MARTZ

*The Communist Party of Venezuela.* By ROBERT J. ALEXANDER. Stanford, 1970. Hoover Institution Press. Hoover Institution Studies. Comparative Communist Party Politics. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. xxi, 246. Cloth, \$6.00. Paper, \$2.80.

*The Communist Party of Venezuela*, Robert J. Alexander's most recent contribution to the field of Latin American politics, forms part of the Hoover Institution's project on the comparative study of nonruling communist parties. The author does not come as a novice to this subject, having written an early study of the movement in this hemisphere, *Communism in Latin America* (1957). In the present work he examines the Venezuelan Communist Party (PCV) by way of topical chapters on its history, its structure and organization, the local political environment in which it functions, its relations with other communist parties, and the principal determinants of party behavior.

To this reviewer the most important contribution of the book is the lengthy chapter on the PCV's experiment with urban and rural violence between 1962 and 1966. The author rightly regards as disastrous for the PCV its decision to take up the armed struggle. It was a mistake which, in the span of a few years, took the party from its impressive success in the first years after Marcos Pérez Jiménez' years to near-annihilation by 1966. The principal factor in the failure of the PCV-sponsored terrorist campaign, states Alexander, was the existence in power of a democratic, reform-minded regime, that of Acción Democrática (AD). Although this assumption surely has some validity, the correlation between the popularity of AD reforms and the defeat of the terrorist-guerrilla enterprise is not readily estab-