

AUTHORITARIANISM IN PARAGUAY: The Lesser Evil?*

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- PARAGUAY: A BIBLIOGRAPHY.* By DAVID LEWIS JONES. (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1979. Pp. 499. \$52.00.)
- PARAGUAY'S AUTONOMOUS REVOLUTION, 1810-1940.* By RICHARD ALLEN WHITE. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978. Pp. 295. \$9.95.)
- THE RISE AND FALL OF THE PARAGUAYAN REPUBLIC, 1800-1870.* By JOHN HOYT WILLIAMS. (Austin: University of Texas, Institute of Latin American Studies, 1979. Pp. 286. \$17.95.)
- PARAGUAY AND THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE: THE POSTWAR DECADE, 1869-1878.* By HARRIS GAYLORD WARREN. (Austin: University of Texas, Institute of Latin American Studies, 1978. Pp. 376. \$17.95.)
- THE GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY AND AUTHORITARIANISM IN PARAGUAY.* By MICHAEL GROW. (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1981. Pp. 163. \$20.00.)
- PARAGUAY UNDER STROESSNER.* By PAUL H. LEWIS. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980. Pp. 256. \$22.00.)
- MBARETÉ: THE HIGHER LAW OF PARAGUAY.* By DAVID M. HELFELD AND WILLIAM L. WIFFLER. (New York: The International League for Human Rights, 1980. Pp. 231. \$5.00.)
- GENOCIDE IN PARAGUAY.* Edited by RICHARD ARENS. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976. Pp. 171. \$12.50.)

Landlocked between rivers in the heart of South America, Paraguay's traditional isolation from regional or international crisis and its prolonged political stability have occasioned few serious studies. The large number of works written before 1800 indicate a contemporaneous interest in the colonial period, particularly in the work of the Jesuit missions. Furthermore, the first sixty years of Paraguay's independence were widely treated, first in disputes among critics of the authoritarian rule and later by revisionist historians who stressed the aspects of progress and relative social justice. This promising trend in Paraguayan studies

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unfortunately did not continue. Hence, the publication of a number of books on Paraguay in recent years should be welcomed as important additions to the rather scarce professional literature.

The very paucity of books and articles on Paraguay enabled David Lewis Jones to complete his ambitious enterprise. Jones attempted to include all published information, from the earliest source in the sixteenth century until approximately 1977, within 436 pages and 4331 alphabetized items. Books and articles from Paraguayan periodicals that are available in British, United States, and Canadian libraries as well as articles from non-Paraguayan periodicals are all covered in this resource work. Using mostly British catalogues, Jones has done a most commendable job of providing resource libraries with an excellent, albeit expensive, reference volume. This bibliography suggests some interesting, although perhaps impressionistic, conjectures about professional interest in Paraguay as manifested in the thirteen areas covered (religion, geography, anthropology, economics, sociology and social administration, government and politics, law, education, arts and music, literature, science, medicine, and history). The history section is the largest, being over two hundred pages long. The sections on anthropology and economics, with thirty-seven and thirty pages respectively, include a variety of items, but the slimness of the other areas suggests their unexplored nature. Glancing through the section on government and politics, one is struck to realize how little contemporary academic work has been done in this field. Most of its entries consist of books, official documents, and advocacy pamphlets of Paraguayan political parties written at the beginning of the century.

Given the limitation of Jones's documentary research and the lack of research in libraries and archives in Spain and cities other than Asunción, the comprehensiveness of his study is remarkable. The bibliographies of the other reviewed books in this essay, however, list several items not included by Jones, particularly some books in Spanish and Portuguese published in Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Madrid, and Rio de Janeiro during earlier periods of this century¹ and Paraguayan sections in Latin American readers.² Furthermore, the Paraguayan periodicals listed by Jones do not exhaustively include old and contemporary dailies and weeklies of great political importance.³ As Jones acknowledges, the post-1975 bibliography is not systematically covered. Nonetheless, the reviewed list of books provides the reader with a fairly good idea of current scholarly interest in Paraguay.

Apart from the popular literature and fiction on Nazi criminals, current scholarly interests have focused on the performance of authoritarian rulers and their collapse. Recent studies have eschewed palace intrigues and personality studies in favor of focusing more on social his-

tory, the analysis of human rights, and appraisal of the overall performance of organized groups and forces in society.

Richard Alan White's study of the rule of the elected Dictador Supremo is extremely interesting and well documented. White researched archives in Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina for his *Paraguay's Autonomous Revolution*. This book initially examines the internal and external forces that led to the emergence of Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia. The author then analyzes Francia's role in leading his nation on a twenty-year path to prosperity. The work is divided into three main sections entitled "The Colonial Heritage," "The Revolutionary Process," and "The Struggle for Autonomy."

In the introduction, White briefly describes the tradition of colonial rule in the South American countries from the sixteenth century to the time of Francia's emergence. The author provides a general overview of the constituent support for Francia among the Paraguayan lower classes and of El Dictador's effective tactics for eliminating the wealthy Paraguayan interest groups that threatened his regime. White describes well the overall class and economic structure of nineteenth-century Paraguay and presents an excellent guide to the forces that continually threatened to undermine the Francian regime throughout its twenty years.

After discussing the opposition to Francia, White embarks on a discussion of the research sources for his work and the degree to which many secondary historical publications have been less than accurate because of relying too heavily on biased firsthand sources from the disenfranchised elite. Unfortunately, a large number of historians have accepted these personal accounts as primary historical sources. Although White declares in his introduction that "the subject of this work is not Francia per se, nor is its purpose to vindicate El Dictador," he nevertheless succeeds in vindicating Francia by placing his reign in its proper historical context.

In the spirit of revisionist historians, the author counters the alleged gross exaggerations of Francia's covert tyranny and documents with unquestionable evidence his popular support. In describing what he calls "Latin America's first autonomous revolution," White details the systematic ascension of Francia into a position of power and the disenfranchisement of his opposition groups. A major theme is Francia's method of deriving his support from the masses in order to counterbalance his unpopularity among the displeased Spanish ruling class and creole oligarchy. White considers this restructuring of Paraguayan society to be an internal social revolution. "Unlike the traditional Latin American coup d'état, in which one section of the elite seizes power from another, the Great Conspiracy was not an intraclass conflict, but

rather a class confrontation that pitted the interests of the elite 5 percent of the population against the well-being of the remaining 95 percent of Paraguayans. And while the historical development of Paraguayan class conflict is itself remarkable, its conclusion is even more striking. The oligarchy lost (p. 98)."⁴ The removal of the elites from power is one of White's four primary emphases in analyzing the success of Francia. The other three fundamentals, "the liberation from imperialist domination, the enactment of an egalitarian land reform, and the institution of rational state direction of the economy," provide the foci for White's analysis of the Francia period (p. 172).

White explains Francia's assumption and extension of his ultimately immense power in terms of his reorganizing the armed forces, regulating the church nationally, cleaning up corruption in public office, and selecting judges and officials from the masses. In addition to his control of the domestic situation, the president exercised sound judgment in his policy of nonintervention in international disputes, which did not prevent Paraguay from using its army often as a deterrent force in various areas. The proximity of the volatile Argentinians and Brazilians and the lack of major disputes with those nations during Francia's reign underscore the effectiveness of his policy of building a strong domestic state without threatening the interests of surrounding states.

In the past few years, both radical and conservative scholars have written about Francia's rule, particularly the *dependentista* school. One important contributor of this school, André Gunder Frank, focuses on the "genuinely independent, autonomously generated development effort"⁵ of Francia's Paraguay. Frank discusses this period in order to define the specific characteristics of an *undeveloped* rather than *underdeveloped* society, in which the terms of reference are not established through the metropolis-satellite relation of the capitalist system.

White's text is well illustrated with relevant maps, figures, and tables. The economic figures, drawn largely from state archives, provide strong support for White's favorable statements of Francia's accomplishments. A particularly dramatic table reflects Paraguayan taxes plummeting from 85 percent of the total state budget in 1816 to 7 percent in 1822 under Francia. The quality, indeed meticulousness, of White's research is remarkable. One example of White's attention to detail can be found in Appendix H, which provides statistics on the Paraguayan army from 1828 to 1839, figures illustrating the expansion of the armed forces under Francia.⁶

Although John Hoyt Williams's *Rise and Fall of the Paraguayan Republic 1800–1870* emphasizes the evident terror and paranoid features of the Francia regime, he nevertheless confirms White's assessment: "The average Paraguayan had little if anything to complain about in Dr. Francia's Paraguay. . . . Virtually all of El Supremo's repressions affected the

aristocracy, both Creole and Peninsular. If they affected the common man at all, it was often for the better. Seen from the village level, Francia's domestic policies were populist—a forced leveling and homogenization of a largely rural society" (p. 61).

Based on a three-year study of the Asunción Archives, Williams's volume covers a larger segment of Paraguayan history. After describing the social and economic accomplishments of the Francia period, he goes on to examine the role of two successors to Paraguayan leadership, Carlos Antonio López, "the Builder," and his son, Francisco Solano López, "the Marshall." The latter led Paraguay into the War of the Triple Alliance against Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay, which wiped out the dramatic progress accomplished during the two previous regimes and left the nation immobilized and impoverished for generations to come. Williams is fascinated with the vicissitudes of this seventy-year period, as he reveals in his preface: "Paraguay, today hardly a super-power, was for a while, a century ago, a major regional force. During the 1800–1870 era, it changed from an imperial backwater, half forgotten by Madrid, to a dynamic, dictator-directed, semi-industrialized, semi-militarized, financially sound nation. Unfortunately, the last five years of that period witnessed the virtual destruction of Paraguay and its relegation to almost colonial status vis-à-vis Argentina and Brazil."

Williams places a great deal of emphasis on the *personalista* aspect of Paraguayan leadership, but his analysis of the leaders' political interactions cannot be said to be one-dimensional. Williams presents effective sketches of the rulers by describing their childhood, education, philosophical orientation, and psychological makeup. This thorough evocation provides the reader with a more complete picture of the motivational forces behind the leaders. As well as describing Carlos Lopez's building projects and modernization of Paraguay, Williams discusses in great detail the demographic aspects of Paraguayan society—the Indians, creoles, and blacks—in the context of the social structure of that period. These tangential forays into the social climate of Asunción provide a colorful perspective on the period and interject interest into what would otherwise be a rather colorless general account of Paraguayan domestic and international policy under three dictators. The increasing interest in education, the decrease of pillaging by marauding Indians, the creation of an urban police force, and the construction of state *estancias* (large farms) in outlying provinces all suggest a Paraguay orienting itself toward a safer, more progressive society. Williams's depiction of the advances made by Francia and Carlos Antonio López in these and other arenas dramatically reinforces the tragedy of Francisco Solano López's ascension into power and the subsequent massacre of the Paraguayan people largely because of the actions of their own ruler.

If the vivid portrayal of the three dictators and their cohorts is the

book's strength, it is also its major weakness. At times Williams devotes too much space to describing state social functions and mannerisms.⁷ Furthermore, the tone of the writing often fluctuates from a polished academic style to earthy slang that at times sounds flippant, redundant, and oversimplified. Despite brilliant moments, Williams occasionally restates an unnecessary point. One example follows a stimulating discussion of the appearance of public works in Paraguay under Carlos Antonio López. Underscoring the obvious, Williams writes, "In the positivist world view, Francia had given 'order' and Carlos Antonio was achieving 'progress.' Unhappily, his son would achieve 'ruin'" (p. 171). Although historically rich, William's picturesque descriptions obscure any systematic comparison among the three absolutist rulers. Moreover, introductory and concluding chapters have been omitted, which leaves the reader uncertain as to methodology, major findings, and generalizations.

Harris Gaylord Warren is introduced as the "father of Paraguayan studies in the United States" by John Hoyt Williams in the preface to Warren's text, *Paraguay and the Triple Alliance: The Postwar Decade, 1869–1878*. As the title suggests, this book describes the pathetic situation of a postwar Paraguay destroyed by Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay, and its effort to reconstruct a semblance of a society and to rebuild a government that would culminate in the ascendancy of the Colorado party.

The work opens at the end of the Paraguayan war. Warren vividly describes the destroyed nation, the foodless, naked masses of women and children, the complete economic and moral decay of the country. The text discusses in detail the resurgence of the Lopiztas, the chaotic domestic Paraguay political scene ("Lopiztas became Liberals, Liberals became Colorados, Legionnaires joined Lopiztas"), and the jousting between Argentina and Brazil for influence in the region.

The main part of the work is devoted to describing the postwar environment. Warren presents a detailed scene of postwar suffering, but one that sheds no new light on the human problem of war-torn societies that has existed since time immemorial. Warren's research is also hindered by his own admission that "major dependence has been placed on reports of foreign travelers and diplomats for much of the information." Although Warren states that the pattern of historiographical inconsistency that plagues much of the literature of Paraguayan history need not be extended further, he appears to have added little to the quality of his research by additional emphasis upon biased accounts of foreigners. In this context, Warren's one-dimensional presentation of the lower-class Paraguayan women as perceived by visiting Europeans is perplexing.⁸

The history of Paraguay for the next seven decades is characterized by political turmoil and chaos. Thirty-seven presidents were in

power through this period, but only five managed to complete their term of office. The traditional parties, the “blue” liberals (*liberales*) and the “red” conservatives (*colorados*), consolidated and alternated in power, with the conservatives on top until 1904 and the liberals for the next three decades. No reliable mechanisms of transition were established and the rules of the game were made mostly by army coups and countercoups rather than by elections, which in most cases were contested as fraudulent. No new historical writings cover this period.

Focusing on a period of continuity and stability, *The Good Neighbor Policy and Authoritarianism in Paraguay* by Michael Grow deals with the years 1940–48, when Higinio Moríñigo dominated Asunción’s political scene. Grow successfully covers the transitions of power since the 1936 young officers’ revolution under Rafael Franco and links these changes to the presence of an active U.S. good neighbor policy. Within this four-year period, a negligible U.S. presence grew during the American struggle for influence with the Axis powers. After World War II, the United States achieved a permanent major role in Paraguay. Grow’s opening remarks promise a systematic analysis of the characteristics of U.S. foreign policy toward Paraguay in the following areas: ideological aims in terms of making “democratic” systems prevail over “totalitarianism” (as represented in Paraguay by Fascist and Nazi influence); political ends when supporting the “liberal” pro-United States and United Kingdom forces against the radical right and conservative groupings, some with indigenous characteristics and others with European authoritarian notions; economic ambitions represented in the expansion of exports to new markets and securing access to primary sources while stimulating economic diversification and industrialization; and security factors such as concern about the planning of an Axis invasion in the Western Hemisphere and the threat of fifth-column activities. Although Grow’s agenda is not systematically fulfilled, many of these elements are discussed throughout the pages of the text. The treatment of the above-mentioned areas analyzes this Paraguayan historical period and the impact of U.S. policy in the context of U.S. responses to the Great Depression and U.S. relations with Germany, as well as southeastern South American reactions and the prewar period of the Great Power rivalry in that region. The description of the activities of twenty-six thousand Paraguayan Germans (the largest single group of non-Iberian Europeans out of a total population of about one million) in the late 1930s is detailed and interesting. This discussion evaluates the first community in Latin America to subscribe to Nazism (as early as 1930) and to propound the nationalist-socialist doctrine. Even more striking was the success of this ideology in Paraguayan ruling circles, as is symbolized in the name given to the son of Asunción’s chief of police—Adolfo Hirohito—after the rulers of Germany and Japan.

Beyond the expedient foreign-policy preference of keeping all options open by maintaining good relations with the two contending international camps, much of the nationalist-socialist influence in Paraguay has to be viewed in the context of the past performances of authoritarian regimes in that country. These regimes destroyed traditional elites, centralized economic power under state control, and created grass-roots organizations, all without representative delegation, which channeled popular support and thus legitimized these regimes. Moríñigo's slogan of "discipline, hierarchy, and order" reverberates with the sounds of the Third Reich's slogans. At the same time, U.S. ambassadors became major operators in the Paraguayan political scene. They became involved in political intrigues and steadily gained influence over the local rulers. Grow characterizes such U.S. policy as "liberal imperialism" rather than "liberal internationalism" (p. 114). He implies that the good neighbor policy in Central America and the Caribbean was viewed as progressive because Washington was committed to a policy of nonmilitary intervention. Further south, however, this policy was seen as an increase in U.S. dominance and economic influence. Whereas Samuel Bemis⁹ and others would disagree with this characterization of a rather dichotomous policy, much of the misunderstanding may relate to an inaccurate conceptualization of aid as a foreign policy component. Most Latin American politicians and leaders would probably react differently to the use of "sticks" and "carrots" by Washington's policymakers. Even the benign policy of President Carter that curtailed military transfers to gross violators of human rights was criticized as lacking positive inducements to regimes of a democratic nature, such as Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. In other words, while military intervention and covert operations are seen as destabilizing tools of interference with sovereign countries, the increase or decrease of economic aid and technical assistance is more widely considered to be a legitimate means of augmenting influence. Without such a distinction, one may be forced to concur with Grow's harsh conclusion that "Roosevelt's successors in the White House consistently adopted his 'good neighbor' approach as a prototype for their own policy initiatives toward Latin America, utilizing ever-increasing quantities of ostensibly altruistic United States foreign aid to purchase international support, reward clientelism, discourage nationalism, and generally promote the open, interdependent, liberal world order which remained synonymous with United States economic prosperity and material well-being" (p. 118).

Grow's approach also has to be seen in connection with his characterizing Moríñigo's administration as an "honest and nationalist dictatorship" committed to a limited program of progressive reforms and his statement that liberalization decisions of Moríñigo in 1946

“plunged Paraguay into chaos and bloodshed” (p. 105). In the ranks of Paraguayan historians, Grow is not alone in stressing the positive aspects of authoritarian rule. Richard White departs from his excellent historic approach to become involved in political controversy over liberal views. In explaining Dr. Francia’s belief that democracy was not an end in itself but that mass participation was the top priority, White rightly concludes that democratic constitutions of the early nineteenth century ascribed only formally to these structures because only a small elite participated in the political process. Such terms of restricted democracy could have been challenged by an alternative of benevolent dictatorship, if time limitations and established transition rules could have been guaranteed. Furthermore, history shows the risk of assuming that there are natural means of discerning and supporting “good dictators” and curbing the presence of bad ones. This distinction is especially difficult because some dictators have administered both positive and negative phases. Evidence that history repeats itself twice does not necessarily dictate the outcome of the third time; in Paraguay, Solano López immortalized the great achievements patiently obtained by his two predecessors.

By choosing “economic democracy” over “political democracy” and by assuming their exclusivity, many progressive analysts have joined with those right-wing revisionists who have come to idealize a dictator like Juan Manuel de Rosas in Argentina and to support the return to power of Juan Domingo Perón. Instead of aiming their critical analysis at the false concept of “liberal democracy” of the traditional elites and the legitimation gap between the written text and political realities, these analysts may assume that “benevolent authoritarians” are a lesser evil than anarchy and destruction of accumulated wealth in Paraguayan history. Yet, the rules for legitimate transition of power were destroyed by the so-called benign dictators, who thus created disruptions that were part and parcel of the subsequent tragic times of instability. Hence, turbulent periods cannot be extracted from the causality of the previous sequence of events. Furthermore, such lines of thinking have encouraged additional paternalistic dichotomies today. U.N. Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick distinguishes “traditional authoritarian regimes,” which are supposedly less repressive, from “revolutionary autocracies.” Kirkpatrick also assumes that political and economic democracy are generally mutually exclusive in many of the United States’ southern neighbors.¹⁰ In such an immobilist approach, the processes of change and modernization do not seem to be taken seriously into account. With the liquidation of the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua, only in Paraguay and to a certain extent in Haiti can the classic models of “benevolent authoritarians” still be found. More often than not, the alternative model in the seventies to civilian-controlled democracy or radical revolutionary rule has been the emerging pattern of military corporatism

described by Guillermo O'Donnell as the "bureaucratic authoritarian model."¹¹ It is therefore erroneous to think that Paraguayan history does not clearly provide the tools to approach critically the "functional" presence of the present, long-standing dictatorship of General Alfredo Stroessner. Although for many it is too late in history to view Stroessner conceptually as the "lesser evil," it is not surprising that others would still find him to typify the "benevolent ruler."¹²

The growing emphasis on social history rather than on palace intrigue and the changing conditions of the international system, however, have contributed to an emerging preoccupation with not only the victims of repression but also the social cost of "benevolent authoritarianism." As will be discussed, human rights in Paraguay have become a new, although limited, source of international concern. While it is possible to agree with Grow's statement that "no nation in the Western Hemisphere had a more firmly rooted authoritarian political tradition than Paraguay" (p. 43), this observation does not necessarily lead to the justification, by default, of such a reality. The dilemma appears more starkly when studying the Stroessner rule, where stability and a relatively high rate of economic development have to be balanced against the human cost of repression and corruption.

In *Paraguay under Stroessner*, Paul H. Lewis erroneously introduces Stroessner as the non-Communist political leader with the longest record of uninterrupted state power, apparently forgetting that King Hussein of Jordan assumed power in 1953. Lewis describes El Gran Líder as a type of *caudillo*—the Latin American political buccaneer. Indeed, Stroessner's involvement in overthrowing his five presidential predecessors provided rich experience as a political survivor. But Lewis maintains that "Stroessner's rise to power had nothing to do with charisma. On the contrary, his rivals often overlooked him and underestimated him because he seemed so dull and plodding. Nor was his success at staying in power due to any ability to electrify the masses, despite all the sycophantic adulation that amounts practically to a cult of personality surrounding him. . . . Stroessner dominates Paraguayan politics because he works harder, does his political homework better, and is a first-rate strategist. This slow and steady competence has enabled him to outlast many a brilliant but incautious opponent" (p. 64). Lewis's characterization captures extremely well the Machiavellian and astute personality of the leader. Through the monopoly of military power, the control and purging of his ruling Colorado party, and the temptations of co-optation for the moderate opposition, Stroessner easily managed to control the largest sectors of the elites. The silent majority of the passive peasantry was restrained by a combination of sporadic repression, paternalism, and *compadrazgo* relationships with the local bosses.¹³

The structure of *Paraguay under Stroessner* abandons the

chronological coverage of Paraguayan dictators. This book presents a well-integrated analysis of the politics of the country and provides a background consisting of Paraguayan political culture, the effect of the caudillo's personality, the dictatorship machine, and its interaction and clashes with pressure groups and political parties of the opposition. The growing adversarial role of the Church is well discussed, starting with the isolated opposition in 1958 of Father Ramón Talavera, a parish priest from a poor Asunción neighborhood, to the criticism of the Bishops' conference and the capital's prelate boycott of the meetings of the Junta de Gobierno. It seems doubtless that the Church has become the champion of reform, democracy, and human rights in Paraguay, remaining relatively immune from governmental repression. The liberal Febrerista, liberal Radical, and Christian Democratic parties all had to confront throughout the years of the Stroessner era the dilemma either of playing the rules of Stroessner's game and legitimating the regime by becoming a recognized minority opposition in Congress or of boycotting and denouncing this façade, which would lead to more severe repression and further limitations on their restricted influence. Stroessner's effective policy of sporadic repression has permitted him to project an image of a *dictablanda* (soft dictatorship) in the context of the surrounding *dictaduras* (hard dictatorships) of other Southern Cone regimes.

While Stroessner's regime has compiled a comparatively less-horrendous record of human-rights violations than neighboring regimes, much of the cruel nature of his repressive policies has been exposed. The particular features of repression in Paraguay are documented in the *1980 Report on the Denial of Human Rights in Paraguay* by the Third Commission of Enquiry of the International League for Human Rights, following a first mission in 1976 by Robert Alexander and Ben Stepanky (whose findings were submitted to the International Organizations Subcommittee of the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives) and a follow-up mission in 1977. A word in the local *guaraní* language identifies the particular nature of repression in Paraguay: *mbaraté*, which is translated into English as "superior power over others." "In Paraguay, when the code of *mbaraté* clashes with the legal system, it is the latter which must and does give way."¹⁴ In other words, a parallel system of "justice" is exercised that filters from President Stroessner down through the echelons of party and military hierarchies. What could be seen as arbitrary rule, abuse, and corruption may find a logical explanation when such an additional dimension is taken into consideration. For example, official figures of foreign trade cannot explain the steady value of the *guaraní* as a currency, which has been strengthened by large amounts of contraband and drug trafficking. To take another example, although a repressive legislature and a submissive judiciary could easily sentence communists for ex-

tremely long terms, there have been cases of prisoners who have been held more than fifteen years with no charges being brought and no trial procedures whatsoever. In such a context, as I have described in an Amnesty International Briefing Paper on Paraguay and elsewhere,¹⁵ the treatment of political opponents differs. In the case of official party members who plotted against the government, exile and temporary imprisonment would be considered by *mbaraté* to be sufficient punishment, while Christian Democrats and Radical-Liberals are continuously harassed and penalized by short-term imprisonment and internal or external exile. Communists or other suspected radical-left militants have disappeared and probably have been murdered or indefinitely imprisoned. The type and intensity of torture applied and the conditions of imprisonment may also vary depending on the "clout" of the victim and his family.

David Helfeld and William Wipfler, in *Mbaraté: The Higher Law of Paraguay*, present the minutes of three short interviews with high-ranking Paraguayan officials in which the arbitrariness of their decisions can be easily detected. At the same time, *mbaraté* has functioned as an efficient deterrent because violence has been used only sporadically, when the regime control was perceived as threatened. Occasionally, repressive measures against organizing peasants or a crackdown of left-wing activities have increased the number of prisoners to the hundreds, but such figures often shrink to a few. The human rights policy of the Carter administration, combined with U.S. Ambassador Robert White's effective demarches, brought about the release of the oldest political prisoners on the continent and reduced the number of Paraguayan political prisoners to a handful.

Genocide in Paraguay has been related to a particular ethnic group, the Aché tribes, now probably numbering only a few hundred and facing virtual extinction. Unlike the majority mestizo population, these Indians lived as forest-dwellers. Incriminating reports have surfaced about systematic manhunts, enforced labor that borders on slavery, and compulsory acculturation, all of which contribute to their physical annihilation. The editor of *Genocide in Paraguay*, Richard Arens, did not personally gather the evidence but represented the Aché Indians on behalf of the International League for Human Rights before the United Nations and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. Most of the other contributors also did not have firsthand experience but endorsed the findings of Mark Munzel, a German anthropologist who attracted world attention through two studies originally published by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs in Copenhagen.¹⁶ Munzel learned the Aché language and spent a year with the Aché between 1970 and 1972, after which he wrote incriminating accusations against the Paraguayan government and its agents who allegedly were

involved directly in the manhunt. The book is a moving appeal that is enhanced by a concluding commentary by Elie Wiesel.

The scope, accuracy, and dramatization of the entire work, however, have been questioned by several. They were first challenged by Paraguayans who have worked with Indians, among them the sociologist Chase Sardi,¹⁷ whose credibility is shown by the fact that he was held under arrest in 1975 because of his critical attitude. But Arens and Munzel are even more severely criticized by Kim Hill, a former Peace Corps member who worked and lived with the Aché Indians.¹⁸ The major areas of disagreement relate to the Indians' living conditions on the reservations as compared with the standards of the peasant population in general and, more important, whether there is an established or de facto policy leading to their genocide. While affirming some of Munzel's documentation, Hill shows how highly speculative inferences may distort and exaggerate the picture. In Hill's view, there is no doubt that the Aché were victims of sporadic manhunts often carried out by Paraguayan peasants as punitive action against theft, but Hill insists that the number of Aché killed was smaller than reported. It is also true that the conditions in the government-controlled "National Colony" and its administration were such that sexual violations occurred and the lack of appropriate medical care made the Indians easy victims of epidemics. Hill argues, however, that the Aché were persuaded rather than coerced to go to the reservations. As for the alleged slavery of young Achés, Hill remarks that the pattern of *criado* work, in which Paraguayan families take maids for little or no pay, is more prevalent. Although the factual dispute may arise from the different times of observation, the accuracy and objectivity of the findings of Arens's late 1979 visit to the Aché are also contested.

The next concern of those interested in Paraguay will be the post-Stroessner era. The issue of succession will inevitably arise. The nepotist option of the Somozas and Duvaliers may not be the only one. According to Lewis's prediction, "the likelihood of an old-fashioned military dictatorship succeeding Stroessner becomes remote. No doubt the military will continue to play a large role in Paraguay's politics for the foreseeable future, but unless economic growth is to be sacrificed, it will have to co-opt the talents of civilian technicians to help it govern" (p. 229). Rapid modernization in Paraguay seems to be unavoidable. Because of the formidable surplus of hydroelectric energy, Paraguay's income from exporting electricity to its neighbors is foreseen to be such that it will inject new forces and processes into the dormant society of the past. Such an eventuality has been the subject of an article by Ronald McDonald, who predicted that: "The cohesion of the military—if it can be maintained without Stroessner directly in control—may be a critical variable in the new Paraguayan politics, with increasing pressure from

opposition political parties and politicians, labor leaders and others for a liberalization of the regime. The growing economic interests of Brazil and Argentina in Paraguay as well as their historic geopolitical concerns, could easily inject an international dimension in the shifting alliances and coalitions among the Paraguayan military leaders and politicians."¹⁹ Whether authoritarianism and chaos are the only alternatives remains to be seen. Development, modernization, and an appropriate regional and international environment may introduce some unforeseen additional intermediary options.

NOTES

1. Among the books missing from Jones's bibliography are the following: Themistocles Linhares, *História Econômica do Mate* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Portes, 1936; Rio de Janeiro: 1969); Prudencio de la Cruz Mendoza, *El Dr. Francia en el Virreynato del Plata* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Porter, 1936); Eduardo Salterain, *Artigas en el Paraguay* (Asunción: 1950); Francisco Wisner de Morgenstern, *El Dictador del Paraguay José Gaspar de Francia* (Buenos Aires: Ayacucho, 1957); Victor Arreguire, *Tiranos de América: el Dictador Francia* (Montevideo: 1898); Blanco Sánchez, *Jesús L., El capitán de Antonio Tomás Yegros* (Asunción: Instituto Paraguayo de Investigaciones Históricas, 1961); Guillermo Cabanellas, *El Dictador del Paraguay, el Doctor Francia* (Madrid and Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1946); Enrique Corrales y Sánchez, *El Dictador Francia* (Madrid: Semblanza, 1889); José Segundo Decoud, *Recuerdos históricos: homenaje a los próceres de la independencia paraguaya* (Asunción: 1894); Ramón Gil Navarro, *Años en un calabozo o sea la desgraciada historia de veinte y tantos argentinos muertos o envejecidos en los calabozos del Paraguay* (Rosario: El Ferrocarril, 1863); Tomás Guido, *Los dictadores del Paraguay* (Buenos Aires: 1879); Prudencio de la Cruz Mendoza, *Militarismo en el Paraguay* (Buenos Aires: 1916); Diego Luis Molinari, *Viva Ramirez* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Coni, 1938); Felix Outes, *Los restos atribuidos al Dictador Francia* (Buenos Aires: Casa J. Peuser, 1925); José M. Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y el Doctor Francia* (Madrid: Editorial América, 1917); Eduardo Aramburu, *Manifiesto al pueblo paraguayo* (Montevideo: 1876); and many others.
2. See for instance Helen Graillot, "Paraguay," in Leslie F. Manigat et al., *Guide to the Political Parties of South America* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1973), pp. 368–92; Paul E. Hardley, "Paraguay," in Ben G. Burnett and Kenneth F. Johnson, eds., *Political Forces in Latin America* (California: Wadsworth, 1968); Pablo Neruda, "El Doctor Francia," *Obras completas*, second edition (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1962); Richard Bourne, *Political Leaders of Latin America* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969).
3. Jones's selected list does not include Asunción's periodicals of the last century such as *El Centinela* (1867–68), *El Eco del Paraguay* (1855–57), *La Época* (1857–59), and *El Paraguayo Independiente* (1845–52). Important contemporary newspapers and periodicals not mentioned in the bibliography include *ABC Color*, *Sendero*, *Patria*, *El Radical*, and Buenos Aires–based exile periodicals such as *Febrero* (Febrerista), *El Ateneo* (Febrerista), and *Revolución* (Liberal).
4. As White correctly observes: "In addition to the personalistic Latin American historical tradition, the historiography of this period is further complicated by a confusion between rhetorical form and historical content. Attempting to discredit Francia's regime and thereby support their own position, Francia's enemies have utilized the rhetorical device of attacking his character. Since historians have accepted these partisan attacks as history . . . even the later works attack . . . Francia rather than providing an objective analysis of the epoch's history" (p. 13).
5. See André Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969), p. 287, and his well known "Development of Underdevelopment," in *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review, 1969), pp. 3–17.

6. White not only illustrates that in 1834 thirteen military drummers made 4.25 pesos each, but he also provides the salaries of the master drummer and the apprentice drummers (p. 260). This attention to detail also reflects White's scholarly approach in larger arenas.
7. In what could be considered a superfluous and folkloric description, Williams recorded for posterity the splendour of the time: "There were almost a hundred guests and a military brass band, and . . . though no woman present wore gloves, 'they had not forgotten their rings, which all shone in greater quantity than could be contained on their fingers; the majority were shoeless.' That evening the elite mostly danced the quadrille . . . the music 'more thunderous than harmonious,' . . . the party . . . lasted until two in the morning, some men 'grabbing handfuls of sweets and filling their girlfriends' skirts with them' before leaving for home" (p. 109).
8. Some of Warren's comments can be regarded as sexist: "The lower class Paraguayan women, especially when young, elicited admiring comments from foreign visitors. . . . Their high cheekbones, square chins . . . hardly met a French man's standard of beauty, but he could appreciate a trim ankle and a well-rounded bosom. Unencumbered by corsets or other articles of torture, young women quickly lost their lithe figures, a fate common to women everywhere" (p. 156).
9. Samuel Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1943).
10. See articles by Jeanne Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," *Commentary* 68, no. 5 (November 1979): 34–45; and "U.S. Security and Latin America," *Commentary* 71 (January 1981): 29–40.
11. O'Donnell's concept is discussed by several important scholars in David Collier, ed., *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).
12. Stroessner's rule is often described as a "benevolent authoritarian regime." See, for instance, Paul Hardley's "Paraguay," in Ben G. Burnett and Kenneth F. Johnson, eds., *Political Forces in Latin America* (Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth, 1968), p. 380. He is also called a "democratic despot" (*Newsweek*, 12 February 1973). His supporters contend that he can rely on the "sympathy and confidence of his citizens [because] without internal dissidences and without any other ideal than the patriotic aim to place a firm and strong authority over the wide base of the popular verdict, as a foundation of constructive peace and work, it is Stroessner's policy which has permitted the positive achievement of the values of the nation." *Alfred Stroessner, His Life and Thoughts* (Asunción: El Arte, 1958), p. 3.
13. The allegiance of the peasant masses is maintained by means of traditional "Dyadic Contracts" and a patronage system based on the personalistic approach characteristic of caudillo politics. This issue is discussed by Frederick Hicks in "Interpersonal Relationship and Caudillismo in Paraguay," *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs* 13, no. 1 (January 1971): 89–111; see also E. Wolf, "Caudillo Politics: A Structural Analysis," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2 (January 1967): 168–79.
14. Helfeld and Wipfler, p. 155.
15. Amnesty International, *Paraguay Briefing Paper* no. 4 (London: Amnesty International, 1976); and Amnesty International, *Muertes en la tortura y desapariciones de presos políticos en Paraguay* (London: Amnesty International, 1977).
16. Mark Munzel, *The Aché: Genocide in Paraguay*, Document no. 11 (Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs [IWGIA], 1973); and Mark Munzel, *The Aché: Genocide Continues in Paraguay*, Document no. 17 (Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 1974).
17. See article by Paraguayan sociologist Miguel Chase Sardi, "API Denies the Declarations Emittted by Arens," *Hoy* (Asunción), 22 February 1979.
18. Kim Hill (unpublished manuscript, circa 1980). Hill worked with the north tribe of Aché from October 1977 to February 1979 and March to August 1980. His meticulous and factual disagreements with Munzel and Arens's accounts seem to be extremely credible.
19. Ronald H. McDonald, "The Emerging New Politics in Paraguay," *Inter-American Economic Affairs* 35, no. 1 (Summer 1981):44.