

### **The Peruvian Experiment**

Abraham F. Lowenthal (ed.), *The Peruvian Experiment—Continuity and Change under Military Rule*, Princeton University Press, 1975, £4.79

*David Winder*

The Peruvian military regime's attempts to pursue a nationalist development strategy with the declared aim of restructuring society and redistributing power has attracted great interest throughout Latin America and the Third World. This volume constitutes the first systematic attempt to assess the nature and extent of the changes initiated by the government. It brings together ten papers analysing the social, economic and political consequences of government policies in areas of major significance: income distribution, urbanisation, peasant participation, land reform, education reform, foreign investment and the organisation of economic activity. In each case the policy study is placed in an historical context and comparisons are drawn with previous Peruvian governments.

In the opening chapter, the editor provides a concise overview of the government's general strategy and draws the reader's attention to some of the ambiguities and contradictions in the policies of the Peruvian 'revolution'. He introduces one question which is of great interest to Peruvianists,

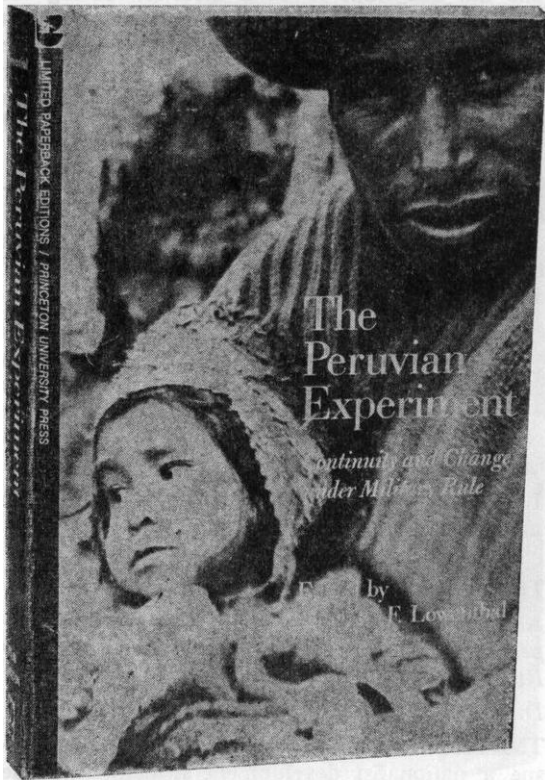
namely, the reasons why the regime has been unable to translate its promises about full popular participation into action. It is partly answered by other contributors who examine the nature of the regime's corporatist approach. David Collier, in his analysis of the role of SINAMOS

Peru (see Long and Winder, *Journal of Development Studies* Volume 12 No. 1 1975) supports the conclusion that the difficulties faced by the government in attempting to restructure rural institutions stemmed principally from its failure to anticipate the consequences of their policies.

Other contributors, however, give examples of the government's willingness to modify policies as a result of pressure or difficulties in implementation. Colin Harding, in his excellent chapter entitled 'Land Reform and Social Conflict in Peru', indicates the government's preparedness to improvise and experiment in response to new demands and expectations. Drysdale and Myers in their analysis of higher education policy illustrate the tendency of the regime to announce a policy unilaterally and then subsequently to modify it radically in response to criticism and protest and following a process of widespread consultation.

One of the areas of most concern to those engaged in policy making is its effect on the distribution of power and rewards. Richard Webb, in his well-documented analysis of the impact of a wide range of government policies on income distribution in Peru, shows that redistribution has taken place *within* the richer productive sectors and has had a *negative* effect on the economic and political position of the poorer groups in Peruvian society. The studies of agrarian reform policy confirm that benefits have been concentrated predominantly in the hands of the more prosperous and better organised segments of the rural population in the wealthy regions of the country. It would appear that the 'revolution' has had severe limitations in terms of effecting structural change. Jane S. Jaquette, in the concluding chapter of the volume, compares the rhetoric and reality of the military regime's national development policy with that of Belaunde's government. She traces elements of ideological and political continuity and change.

In conclusion, this volume presents a range of articles which examine major policy areas from different disciplinary and methodological perspectives. The end result is a welcome addition to the literature on public policy studies in the Third World and merits the close attention of all those concerned with development studies.



(National System for the Support of Social Mobilisation), the agency assigned the task of promoting popular participation, shows how it was used to control the political life of the squatter settlements in Greater Lima. At the same time he suggests that the government policy on the 'pueblos juvenes' (new towns) has been one of the more successful aspects of their attempts to transform Peruvian society.

The picture in the area of rural development policy is highly complex and any analysis of policy implementation has to take into account the wide diversity of Peru's agrarian structure, levels of social mobilisation, integration and economic development. Susan C. Bourque and David Scott Palmer in their paper 'Transforming the Rural Sector: Government Policy and Peasant Response' illustrate how this diversity produced a wide range of responses to government initiatives. My own work in the Central Highlands of