In 1957, Erdstein went to Brazil ultimately finding a place on the security staff of the governor of Paraná. Erdstein became increasingly involved in the search for the survivors of the Third Reich who were attempting to lay the foundations for a Fourth Reich in the backlands of Brazil and Paraguay. He just missed a chance to arrest Martin Bormann, but soon was on a new hunt when he learned in 1968 that Mengele was in Brazil. In short order Mengele was arrested and sequestered while Erdstein made arrangements to smuggle him into Argentina for extradition. The aftermath of an attempted rescue left Mengele head down in the waters of the Paraná carrying five slugs from Erdstein’s Taurus .38. Dead, as Erdstein tells the tale.

For an account of the search for the escaped Nazi war criminals, I certainly prefer Wiesenthal who appears to be the unacknowledged source of much of the detail on the Nazis in Erdstein’s book. For those seeking insight into recent Brazilian history, any general text will suffice. For picaresque excitement, why not the adventures of Pedro Malazarte?

University of Maryland

DONALD GIFFIN


This report, written by a Peruvian anthropologist with long experience of work in technical aid programs, provides a useful summary of information about a little known aspect of the history of colonization of the Amazonian lowlands: the attempts of the Peruvian government and several international organizations to direct some programs of colonization in the Amazonian area of Peru.

The study is divided in two parts. The first part gives a compact and up-to-date description of the geography and ecology of the area, a history of the attempts of human occupation, and a summary of the Peruvian legislation in relation to colonization. The second part is a very critical study of the origin and present situation of five projects of colonization. All projects had a different origin, planning was really nonexistent, and actions were improvised to cope with emergencies; technical aid was not based on serious studies nor did it take into account the human and economic goals of the colonizers. Most of the colonizations are characterized by a high turnover and defection of colonists and the waste of meager resources due to lack of planning.

The author has made a very commendable effort to provide factual documentation and limit theoretical interpretations to a minimum. The study ends with a long summary of its main points and an extensive bibliography of Peruvian official sources. It should be a welcome addition to the relatively few studies of present attempts to settle the Amazonian lowlands from the highlands of Peru.

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GABRIEL ESCOBAR