
Winner of the Premio Siboney 1978 en Ensayo, this modest and lucid volume will doubtless become required reading at the University of Santo Domingo, which in 1539 opened its doors to the first university law studies in the Americas. This is frankly a work of synthesis, based on the major cedularios and secondary sources, including the contributions of a growing number of Dominican Republic scholars. But it also affords tantalizing glimpses into surviving colonial archives on the island: curses against perjured witnesses, the ceremony for taking possession of property (notes 31 and 138), and a half-dozen documents concerning land title, sales, wills, and manumission in the appendix.

Brisk introductory chapters cover the historical background of colonial law in Haiti-Hispaniola—Spanish peninsular law, law in Taino society, the legal basis for discovery, and initial juridical experiments in the new settlement. A large central chapter, "El derecho indiano dominicano," details the administrative-legal system of the colonial period (public law, private law, land law), with emphasis on local modifications. Concluding chapters sketch the transient changes and the lasting influences on Dominican Republic law in the stormy final years of the Spanish colony, French occupation, and first independence.

Weakest in law on the Indians—for example, there is no mention of the Hispaniola Indian slave traffic and its legal and extra legal aspects—the book is clear about economic factors and most original on private and procedural law. The author has previously published a detailed study of procedure for trying cases before the Audiencia of Santo Domingo and promises future monographs on the main juridical institutions in the five-century history of his homeland.

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HELEN RAND PARISH


With great consistency of style and format Professor Zavala continues his compendium of colonial labor regulations and debates in Peru (I reviewed Volume I in HAHR, November 1979). Once again the official