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### Title

*Red Against Blue: The Liberal Party in Colombian Politics, 1862-1899.*  
By HELEN DELPAR. University: University of Alabama Press, 1981. Pp.  
xiii + 262. Notes, bibliography, index. \$23.50.

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*Red Against Blue: The Liberal Party in Colombian Politics, 1863-1899.* By HELEN DELPAR. University: University of Alabama Press, 1981. Pp. xiii + 262. Notes, bibliography, index. \$23.50.

There has been a scarcity of major studies dealing with the political history of Latin America during the nineteenth century. Helen Delpar provides a much needed service by reviewing this era in Colombia. This nation is of special interest today because it is the only Latin American country dominated by two political parties with origins traceable to the last century.

Delpar focuses on the Liberal Party and examines its philosophy, organization, growth, successes, and failures. She devotes the first half of the book to the internal structure of the party. It emerged as a permanent political force in the 1840s and, except for the Conservative Party and the Catholic Church, was the only institution able to cut across regional and class lines to help politically integrate the nation. Liberals generally espoused many of the standard beliefs of their counterparts in Europe and the United States such as individualism, limited laissez-faire, and secularism. While their liberal philosophy was a unifying force, factionalism was nonetheless prevalent. Some members questioned the reforms made by their party, especially the tendency toward centralization and anti-clericalism.

The author analyzes electoral data from the various states to determine regional and socio-economic support for the party, and biographical data to produce a survey of party leaders. Noting the limitations of these sources, Delpar concludes that the Liberal Party gained diverse support, a factor which inhibited internal discipline as well as helped to prevent the formulation and execution of coherent party programs. Despite this varied support, she finds that lowland, coastal areas containing large numbers of blacks and mulattoes were likely to be Liberal. In addition, regions characterized by economic innovation, especially those directed toward the development of commercial agriculture, were usually areas of Liberal strength. This was partly a reflection of the reform reputation of the party which had manifested itself in such ways as support for emancipation and a willingness to use governmental powers to stimulate economic activity.

In examining the regional origins, family lineage, wealth, and education of party leaders, Delpar finds that most came from the eastern half of the country. They were more likely to be from the provincial gentry than the colonial aristocracy and were not identified exclusively with any specific economic sector. The leaders exhibited a secular, meliorist, individualistic world view which had been shaped by their liberal fathers and their educational environment.

The second half of the book concentrates on Liberals working within the political process. Delpar contends that the Liberals were not a party in the modern sense because of a lack of strong ties between federal and state organizations. It did have, however, consciously shared perspectives, beliefs, and a durable base of popular support. Much

detail is given to some of the outstanding personalities and major issues that dominated the political scene. Delpar effectively shows that Liberals lacked cohesion and a unified program. Especially after 1875 the party suffered frequent infighting which resulted in the development of splinter groups. By 1885 these disputes led to the defeat of the Liberals and the introduction of the Conservative-dominated government which lasted until the end of the century. The author offers an extended analysis of Liberal activity during this period focusing on the party's attempt to regain power. Unhappiness over their exclusion from public life, in addition to their displeasure over existing economic conditions, compelled many Liberals to resort to violence as a way of removing their enemies from power. The resulting War of the Thousand Days plunged Colombia into its most destructive period during the nineteenth century.

Delpar provides a well-researched account of Liberal activity during the past century. Yet her book has some weaknesses. The title of the book is somewhat misleading since the author concentrates essentially on the Liberal Party rather than on the struggles between Liberals and Conservatives. Her examination of Liberals within the political process discusses little the policies supported and instituted by the party. Also lacking is an investigation of politics at the local level and how and in what ways local and national political organizations were integrated.

Much of Delpar's narrative is a rejection of the thesis posited by Charles W. Bergquist in *Coffee and Conflict in Colombia, 1886-1910* (1978) that socio-economic factors played the major role in shaping politics during this period. While not disregarding these factors, Delpar is on solid ground in stressing the importance of regionalism and the diversity within political groups. Since she views regionalism as so significant, she might have presented a more in-depth analysis of important regional conflicts.

In the preface Delpar makes a provocative statement speculating that the persistence into recent times of a form of liberal democracy in twentieth century Colombia can be traced to the evolution of the party system in the nineteenth century. Inasmuch as this was not the central theme of the present study, perhaps in future investigations she can expand more on this subject. Despite its shortcomings, this book is a useful contribution to the political history of nineteenth century Latin America.

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*The Revolutionary Origins of Modern Japan.* By THOMAS M. HUBER. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1981. Pp. xi + 260. Notes, bibliography, index. \$19.50.

It is common to compare historical events in Japan and other non-Western countries to European "models." Unusual