RECENT HISTORICAL WORKS ON NINETEENTH-CENTURY MEXICO

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THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY. Compiled and edited by NORMAN E. TUTOROW. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981. Pp. 427. $37.95.)

MEXICO: FROM INDEPENDENCE TO REVOLUTION, 1810–1910. Edited with commentary by W. DIRK RAAT. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982. Pp. 308. $21.50 cloth, $8.95 paper.)

LIFE IN MEXICO. By FRANCES CALDERON DE LA BARCA. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982. Pp. 548. $25.00 cloth, $6.95 paper.)

THE ALMADAS AND ALAMOS, 1783–1867. By ALBERT STAGG. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1978. Pp. 173. $11.50 cloth, $5.95 paper.)

ON THE PERIPHERY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY MEXICO: SONORA AND SINALOA, 1810–1877. By STUART F. VOSS. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982. Pp. 318. $17.85.)

THE REFORM IN OAXACA, 1856–76: A MICROHISTORY OF THE LIBERAL REVOLUTION. By CHARLES R. BERRY. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981. Pp. 282. $20.00.)

MEXICAN GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC: THE BANCO DE AVIO. By ROBERT A. POTASH. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1959, 1983. Pp. 251. $27.50.)

GROWTH AGAINST DEVELOPMENT: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RAILROADS IN PORFIRIAN MEXICO. By JOHN H. COATSWORTH. (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1981. Pp. 249. $20.00.)

These eight books, published between 1978 and 1983, are but a sample of the recent outpouring of diverse publications in Mexican historiography.[1] These particular works all reflect North American research, but important work has also been published elsewhere, notably in Mexico itself.[2] Several of the books listed are representative of some recent scholarly trends, especially those in subnational and microhistory and in the specialized economic studies.[3] Interested readers should also refer to the survey of literature on nineteenth-century Mexico published between 1968 and 1978 by Stephen R. Niblo and Laurens B. Perry, "Recent Additions to Nineteenth-Century Mexican Historiography."[4]

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The books treat various aspects of Mexican history during the nineteenth century, and at first glance, that focus appears to be the only thread running through all of them. In most cases, however, there are deeper connections, and the books do form something of a coherent package for review, each illuminating different aspects of the reality of nineteenth-century Mexico. For example, John Coatsworth writes about economic development in Porfirian Mexico via the railroads, while Robert Potash examines an earlier and different kind of effort at industrial development through a government-sponsored investment bank, the Banco de Avío. Furthermore, that marvelous classic of nineteenth-century travel accounts, the letters Frances Calderón de la Barca published as *Life in Mexico*, relates indirectly, if not directly, to the other two works. She writes of political turmoil and the insecurity of life and property in Mexico around 1840, conditions that affected economic progress. She also records a visit in 1841 to a cotton factory in Puebla established with the aid of the Banco de Avío. She observed that the bank was "intended as an encouragement to industry. But industry is not of the nature of a hothouse plant, to be forced by artificial means; and these grants of funds have but created monopolies, and consequently added to the general poverty" (p. 344). Robert Potash disagrees with this judgment on the bank. While acknowledging the adverse effects of political instability and primitive transportation, he concludes that the capital invested by the Banco de Avío, although small, was crucial, and its role in the growth of a mechanized cotton industry, important (pp. 151ff.).

The Berry, Voss, and Stagg works are interrelated in various ways. All three are local histories: Charles Berry concentrates on the southern state of Oaxaca, while Stuart Voss focuses on Sinaloa and Sonora in the Northwest and Albert Stagg deals with Sonora, centering on the town of Alamos. Although Stagg presents primarily a family biography and Voss paints on a larger canvas, there is obvious overlap between them. Berry emphasizes the Liberal Reform in Oaxaca, a movement necessarily dealt with by Voss and Stagg.

W. Dirk Raat's reader for undergraduate students complements several of the books because his selections further illuminate individuals or themes dealt with in other works. For example, the selections on Antonio López de Santa Anna fit with the observations of Frances Calderón de la Barca, who knew that supreme opportunist; the Charles Hale article on the conservative statesman Lucas Alamán complements the Potash work because Alamán was the guiding genius behind the creation of the Banco de Avío; and the pieces by Richard Sinkin on the Reform and Jack Dabbs on the French intervention dovetail with Berry's study.

The book of least interest to Mexicanists, but nonetheless a valu-

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able scholarly aid for historians of the United States, is *The Mexican-American War: An Annotated Bibliography*, compiled and edited by Norman Tutorow. Tutorow largely restricts his bibliography to materials on the period of the war, and thus most of the items deal with military activity. The section on periodical literature is the most exhaustive and its annotations are the most extensive. One value of this bibliography is that it not only shows what has been done, but also what needs to be done—where the gaps are in the historiography of the war.

For Mexicanists, the usefulness of the bibliography is seriously limited by the dearth of Mexican sources. Tutorow cites only a few government documents, but he does include other sources for the Mexican side of the war, such as works by contemporary political figures like Lorenzo de Zavala and modern scholars like Carlos Bosch García, Charles Hale, and Gene Brack. Tutorow also includes some important guides to research.

Raat's reader, *Mexico: From Independence to Revolution, 1810–1910*, consists of twenty-six selections in four parts: Independence, 1810–24 (five selections); the Age of Santa Anna, 1824–54 (seven selections); La Reforma and the French Intervention, 1855–76 (four selections); and the Porfiriato, 1876–1910 (ten selections). The material is drawn mostly from secondary sources by leading U.S. and Mexican thinkers and scholars, for example, Hugh Hamill, William Beezley, Richard Sinkin, Charles Hale, John Coatsworth, Octavio Paz, and Daniel Cosío Villegas. Other selections are by contemporaries such as Antonio López de Santa Anna, José I. Limantour, John Kenneth Turner, and Charles Flandrau. Some primary material is included, like the 1821 Plan of Iguala, the 1906 Liberal Party Program, and the 1910 Plan of San Luis Potosí. Each part of the reader is introduced by Raat, who provides a historical context to acquaint students with the period, its major themes, and problems of interpretation. He also introduces each selection, providing information about the author and the main themes and conclusions. The materials and writers chosen reflect Raat's intention of illustrating the diversity of themes and interpretations of Mexico's nineteenth-century history. But he also seeks to show the underlying continuity in trends and development, such as the evolution of liberal thought, the rise of caudillos, church-state conflict, and foreign influence and intervention. Raat has succeeded in his objectives; this reviewer has used the reader in the classroom with success.

Another appealing book for the classroom is *Life in Mexico*. This jewel of travel accounts was an instant success when first published in the United States in 1843, and it has gone through numerous editions since. The Scottish-born Frances Erskine Inglis wrote these letters while in residence in Mexico with her diplomat husband, the Spanish Minis-

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ter, Angel Calderón de la Barca. The fifty-four letters included in the book span the period from October 1839 to April 1842.

Fanny Calderón de la Barca's pen touches everything—the ordinary and the extraordinary. She writes about such diverse topics as: individuals and every social group; life in the city and in the country; rural highway men and urban robbers and beggars; music and the theatre; churches and religious celebrations, from Christmas *posadas* to Holy Week ceremonies; bullfights; foods and folk medicines; politics and revolutions; schooling, hospitals, insane asylums, and foundling homes; farming and manufacturing. In sum, this work provides a magnificent "slice of life," albeit colored by the author's class and national biases. It is a valuable historical source.

What justifies yet another edition of this classic, introduced by the distinguished colonialist Woodrow Borah, is the goal of making it available in a relatively inexpensive soft-cover edition. The appeal and usefulness for the general reader, as well as for the college student, would have been increased if some annotation and commentary were provided and if the names of individuals were not left blank, with only the first and last letters, as in the original. Nevertheless, a new edition in paperback is welcome.

The two books on the Northwest, Albert Stagg's *The Almadas and Alamos, 1783–1867*, and Stuart Voss's *On the Periphery of Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Sonora and Sinaloa, 1810–1877*, are closely related but very different. Stagg is a descendant of the Almada family, the subject of his study. He traces the family from the arrival of the dynasty's founder in Alamos, Sonora, in 1783 to the end of the French-supported empire of Maximilian in 1867. Interwoven with this essentially family history are political, economic, Indian, and many other matters that touched or involved the family. The Almadas were essentially a state power, not a national influence, reflecting the fact that Sonora during most of those years was on "the periphery" of Mexican life, as Stuart Voss notes. Silver mining formed the economic base of the Almada fortune and prominence. The family was republican and proindependence early in the nineteenth century, and later it supported the Liberal-Federalists. One of the clear themes in the book is the political opportunism of most individuals, although the Almadas were consistently liberal. Nevertheless, the family divided on two occasions, partly for personal and partly for ideological reasons. It was not only the Almada family that split over political causes; in fact, working both sides of the political street was an important factor in the survival of a family's fortune in unsettled times. Charles Harris documented this practice in his excellent study of another prominent northern family, the Sánchez Navarros of Coahuila.[5]

The Stagg book is filled with fascinating vignettes about people

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and life in Alamos and Sonora, providing the reader with a different side of history than is usually found in more dispassionate studies, such as Stuart Voss's detailed examination of Sonora and Sinaloa. The Almadas necessarily appear in *On the Periphery of Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Sonora and Sinaloa, 1810–1877*, whose major themes include the transformation of family-based politics into a nationally oriented, institutionally-based political structure and the way local elites reached an accommodation with national political interest (p. xii). Voss's regional history complements, but also goes beyond, Stagg's family history.

Voss supplies the greatest detail and depth for the decade from 1867 to 1877 while mostly surveying the earlier years in the region. He focuses on the so-called urban notables in Sonora and Sinaloa, and he explains their common interests and problems as well as the differences between them. For example, in the 1830s, Sinaloa's progress was not hampered, as was Sonora's, by the continuing Indian threat. In both cases, however, notables sought political control of their states and then commercial expansion and progress in general. Intercity rivalries, especially in Sinaloa between Culiacán and Mazatlán, and familial concerns remained the core of politics in the 1830s. Nationally, the one issue that concerned the urban notables was centralization of power, but association with the federalists or centralists solved nothing.

With the coming of the Liberal Reform in the mid-1850s, followed by French intervention and Maximilian's empire in the 1860s, the "urban gentry" of the Northwest became increasingly involved in national affairs, and they increasingly identified with the interests of the nation. Nevertheless, political factionalism continued, and ideals were mixed with opportunism. In both states, these years signified economic dislocation and political divisions.

It had been expected that political harmony and economic progress would follow the military victory over internal and external enemies. The decade of the Restored Republic, 1867–77, fulfilled neither of those hopes. Two major contradictions emerged after 1867, one economic and one political. Local interests in the Northwest believed that the Liberal Reform meant local control. But the creation of a national economy required national initiatives and national policies with local interests adapting to the national context. Politically, liberalism had meant decentralization of authority, less national power. These two dichotomies—economic and political—between liberalism and nationalism frustrated economic progress and political stability in the Restored Republic. Matters came to a head politically due to President Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada's centralizing efforts. Insurrections occurred throughout the country, with Porfirio Díaz being the beneficiary. After his success in 1876, some urban notables concluded that "the promotion of

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local interests necessitated the forging of close, working connections with those who directed the nation's politics in Mexico City" (p. 300).

The Northwest, Voss's periphery, was destined to become a major center of revolution against the long Díaz dictatorship and the cradle of national leaders for two decades after 1910. But at the other end of the republic, another periphery—Oaxaca—had been the cradle of national leadership for the previous fifty years under Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz. This state is the focus of Charles Berry's work, *The Reform in Oaxaca, 1856–76: A Microhistory of the Liberal Revolution*, the reform in which both Juárez and Díaz played prominent roles.

Berry takes his inspiration from the much acclaimed pioneer of microhistory, *Pueblo en vilo: microhistoria de San José de Gracia* by Luis González.[6] Berry believes that the Reform can best be understood and analyzed through the microhistorical approach because

> the essence of the Reform lies in the tribulations, fears, and insecurity, both physical and economic, of individuals caught up in an attempt to restructure basic institutions and patterns of life. It lies in political factionalism, which became so much of an impediment to carrying out the Liberal programs that in the end the Reform turned out to be something different from what was originally contemplated. The essence lies in the dilemmas forced upon various groups in society ranging from clerics and nuns, who saw their old way of life virtually swept away, to politicians, who were tempted to commit treason in order to find some means of livelihood. It lies in the patriotic fervor and steadfastness of some as opposed to the doubts and waverings of others. By taking this view from the microhistorical level, one begins to perceive why the Reform evolved as it did, why it was concurrently a positive and negative movement, and what its accomplishments and its shortcomings were. (P. xviii)

Berry traces the confusion, complexity, and agony of the Reform, from early measures like the 1856 law that deprived civil and ecclesiastical corporations of their real estate holdings and the promulgation of the new national constitution in early 1857 to the later, more radical nationalization of church wealth and foreign intervention. Moderate liberals who controlled the state government from 1858 to 1863, and often indifferently enforced national reform decrees, were replaced by radical leadership with the crisis of the French Intervention because national authorities believed that moderates could not be relied upon to carry out the measures deemed necessary to survive the crisis.

After the occupation of Oaxaca City in February 1865 by Imperial forces, large numbers of moderates cooperated with the invaders in order to gain offices and in hopes of enjoying the peace and order that earlier regimes often could not provide. Ironically, the one segment of the population that did not accept the French or the Empire was the clergy, who objected to the invaders' acceptance of various aspects of the liberal reform program. Clerical opposition was one factor in the

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failure of the intervention and the Empire. But the fundamental factor, according to Berry, was the friction between Mexican officials and their French and Austrian overlords, which resulted in a lack of cooperation and effective action.

The consequences of collaboration with the Empire in Oaxaca may be compared with those in the Northwest as reported by Voss and Stagg. Reconciliation quickly replaced revenge in Oaxaca because of the shortage of talented officials. Most leaders had cooperated with the Empire, and they were needed to staff the new republican government. Berry concludes that the Reform curbed ecclesiastical power and influence and virtually destroyed conservatism as a political force, but it did not eliminate militarism or unbridled personal ambition. In Oaxaca these two factors were the most prominent features of the decade of the Restored Republic, and they held Oaxaca back from economic progress and stability.

Berry reserves one-quarter of the text for his detailed analysis of the corporate property issue, which reflects its importance in the Reform. He found that property taken from corporations glutted the market and that only a few people acquired it. The urban middle class enlarged somewhat, and a number of lower-class members moved into the middle class through the assault on corporate property; in the countryside too, small private landowners increased in number. Disentailment was thus neither a complete success nor a complete failure in Oaxaca.[7] Berry ends his valuable study on a somber note. Property ownership was somewhat enlarged and education was better endowed, but disruption of life, setbacks in the economy, and bitterness and cleavage in society were high prices to pay for the changes that occurred (p. 197).[8]

Charles Berry's microhistory of the Reform in Oaxaca is partly a political study and partly a social and economic study. The final two books to be reviewed here are not microhistory, but they are economic studies and are inevitably partly political too. Both Robert Potash and John Coatsworth examine somewhat successful efforts in economic development.

In *Mexican Government and Industrial Development in the Early Republic: The Banco de Avío*, Potash studies the agency established following independence to carry out the government's industrial plans; he also examines other aspects of government economic policy, notably the role of the tariff. Because the textile industry received most of the government's attention, it is the focus of this monograph.

Throughout most of the 1820s, manufacturing industries languished. In 1829 the newly elected government of Vicente Guerrero believed that tariffs were the means to increasing industrial production and employment. But the conservative government of Anastasio Busta-

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mante, which soon replaced that of Guerrero, was primarily concerned with encouraging technological change, especially with introducing factory methods of manufacture. The law of October 1830 established a national industrial-promotion bank, the Banco de Avío, with capital of one million pesos accumulated from a 20 percent portion of customs duties collected on imported cotton goods. The bank was managed by a three-man board, headed by the Minister of Relations, whose role was in fact dominant. The bank granted loans to companies and individuals, and it purchased and distributed industrial machinery, particularly for textile production. The objective was to encourage private entrepreneurs and private capital to enter industrial fields. Potash details the bank's history from its establishment in 1831 to its suppression in 1842, which ended "the first attempt by a Mexican government to develop industry with public funds" (p. 119).

The Banco de Avío's success was hampered by careless loans, political instability, and financial difficulties. Despite these problems, Potash judges the bank favorably, in contrast to other opinions. The bank financed thirty-one projects, only ten of which (representing about 10 percent of the agency's total investment) were complete fiascos. Although several others closed down before 1845, the remaining fourteen represented 57 percent of the bank's total invested capital. The most notable successes were in textiles, precisely the area the bank was to promote. Potash concludes: "In the cotton-textile field, the bank contributed directly to the establishment of some half-dozen spinning and weaving factories, and to the expansion of mechanical ginning in the agricultural areas. Indirectly, it provided other businessmen with an opportunity to gain experience, and gave them encouragement to enter the field. The fruit of this encouragement was the rapid development of a modernized cotton textile industry in the decade 1835–1845 . . ." (p. 125).

The impact of the government's efforts at industrial development in the 1830s, through the Banco de Avío and through tax and tariff incentives, pales when compared to the significance of the railroads for the economic growth of Mexico during the Porfiriato, 1877–1911. John Coatsworth's *Growth against Development: The Economic Impact of Railroads in Porfirian Mexico* is an impressive study. Besides the broad issue of the relationship of the railroads to economic growth, Coatsworth poses some precise questions: What was the measurable impact of railroad development on national income before 1910? What difference did it make that most of the railroads were built by foreigners in an environment that permitted a relatively free flow of productive factors across international boundaries? What effect did railroads have on the distribution of land during the Porfiriato? Coatsworth proposes several hypotheses and after providing impressive evidence and careful analysis,

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he arrives at clearly stated conclusions. For example, he asks whether the resources and time saved by transporting passengers by rail was large enough to make a difference in national income. He concludes in Chapter 3 that it was not. In contrast, he finds that the railroad carried enough freight so that direct social savings from railroad freight service amounted to a large proportion of national income (Chapter 4). In Chapter 5, he analyzes the high cost to Mexico of railroad development, a cost reflected in two major issues of the 1910 Revolution: social justice for the masses and nationalism, a reaction against foreign presence and domination in much of the economy. In Chapter 6, Coatsworth stresses the railroads' contribution to a new concentration of landholding.

Coatsworth reaches the following conclusions: perhaps as much as one-half of the increase in per capita national income between 1880 and 1910 may be attributed to the construction and operation of the railroads; perhaps the most important social consequence of railroad construction lay in the impetus to greater landownership concentration; the railroad contributed to a significant regressive redistribution of wealth and income; and the railroad helped in suppressing political and social conflict and therefore in stabilizing the regime (pp. 175ff.).

Extensively researched and carefully written monographs like those of John Coatsworth, Charles Berry, Robert Potash, and Stuart Voss contribute importantly to our knowledge and understanding of Mexican history. More personal and impressionistic works like those of Frances Calderón de la Barca and Albert Stagg enhance our feeling and appreciation for the variety and richness of Mexican culture. Together both kinds of works enrich our vision of life in nineteenth-century Mexico.

NOTES

1. *Life in Mexico* by Frances Calderón de la Barca is a reprint of the original 1843 edition, and Potash's *Mexican Government and Industrial Development in the Early Republic: The Banco de Avío* was first published in 1959 in Spanish (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica).
2. For example, Moisés González Navarro, *Anatomía de poder en México, 1848–1853* (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1977); Gerald L. McGowan, *Prensa y poder, 1854–1857* (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1978); Miguel Mejía Fernández, *Política agraria en México en el siglo XIX* (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno, 1979); and Leticia Reina, *Las rebeliones campesinas en México, 1819–1906* (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno, 1980).
3. Among other recent monographs in English that might be included are: Paul Vanderwood, *Disorder and Progress: Bandits, Police, and Mexican Development* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981); and Mary Kay Vaughan, *The State, Education, and Social Class in Mexico, 1880–1928* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1980).
4. *LARR* 13, no. 2 (1978):3–45.
5. Charles H. Harris III, *A Mexican Family Empire: The Latifundio of the Sánchez Navarro Family, 1765–1867* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975).

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6. *Pueblo en vilo* was published by the Colegio de México in 1972. It was translated by John Upton as *San José de Gracia: Mexican Village in Transition* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974).
7. Berry's conclusions for Oaxaca differ markedly from those of Jan Bazant, a leading student of the liberal attack on ecclesiastical property in central Mexico. Bazant found that buyers of church property were to a large extent from the merchant class, that many foreigners participated, and that there was large-scale speculation. None of this was true of Oaxaca, where there were few foreigners and merchants. Bazant also concluded that the Reform in central Mexico facilitated and encouraged industrial capitalism and economic growth during the Porfiriato; this was not so in Oaxaca. See Berry, pp. 188–89; and Jan Bazant, *Alienation of Church Wealth in Mexico: Social and Economic Aspects of the Liberal Revolution, 1856–1875*, edited and translated by Michael P. Costeloe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).
8. For another judgment on the qualified success of the Reform, see Robert J. Knowlton, *Church Property and the Mexican Reform, 1856–1910* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976).

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