

edge of Spanish bureaucratic practice in America and its relevance for the problems that confront the modern nations of Latin America.

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*El cabildo abierto colonial. Un estudio de la naturaleza y desarrollo del cabildo abierto, durante los tres siglos de la administración colonial española en América.* By FRANCISCO XAVIER TAPIA. Madrid, 1966. Ediciones Cultura Hispánica. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. 133. Paper.

Tapia's monograph reopens an old question, though perhaps to little effect. With a brief glance at the exceedingly complex traditions of municipal democracy in medieval Iberia, the author proceeds to the heart of his work. This consists of a recital of the events surrounding several dozen *cabildos abiertos* held during the three centuries of colonial sway in all corners of Spanish America. These short narratives are arranged according to the type of occasion that necessitated the calling of a more or less general town meeting. Thus, in the chapter concerning the founding and removal of cities, we are presented anecdotal accounts of the founding of Lima in 1535, the peregrinations of Guatemala in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the removal of Guadalajara in the 1530s, and the abortive removal of La Serena in the 1690s. Subsequent sections set out in like fashion the sometimes obscure role of the *cabildo abierto* in the election of local officials (including such worthies as governors and a bishop), discussion of municipal religious observances, the voting of gifts of money to the Crown, measures for communal defense against pirates, Indians, and epidemics. In the last chapter the author summarizes his findings: "We believe that the evidence shown permits us to conclude that in the colonial *cabildo abierto* are to be found the seeds of a true democracy, that has perhaps not yet come to fruition . . . in any of the Spanish American republics" (p. 93). Unfortunately it permits nothing of the sort.

The problem of method is central. In eschewing analysis, the author is apparently aware that his universe is too large and his sample too small for drawing significant conclusions. As he looks at those towns—Asunción, Montevideo, Guatemala—where the *cabildo abierto* seems to have led a particularly vigorous life, the author does not possess enough data to permit anything like a case study approach. But what, then, is the point of his book? Moreover, Tapia has missed major opportunities. He has quite neglected the political role of the *cabildo abierto*—as ratifier, if nothing else—in the Comunero move-

ments of the eighteenth century and especially in the events that flowed from the constitutional crisis of 1808. One does not have to share fully the *suarecista* thesis to wish that the question of the locus of sovereignty in Hispanic American political society had been explored. Thus the book does little more than demonstrate once again that in the interstices of the Spanish colonial system, and particularly at its periphery, there existed certain limited possibilities from below.

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*Historia de la Iglesia en la América Española. Desde el Descubrimiento hasta comienzos del siglo XIX. Hemisferio sur.* By ANTONIO DE EGAÑA. Madrid, 1966. La Editorial Católica. Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos. Illustrations. Maps. Index. Pp. xix, 1126, xxxii.

In Father Egaña's view, the history of the Spanish American Church falls into three periods: the ancient (1509-1556), the middle (1556-1700), and the modern (1700-1833). In the first period the Church was founded mainly by regulars who accompanied or directly followed the conquistadores. In the second the secular clergy partly displaced the founding fathers, and outstanding bishops and archbishops carried out the Tridentine Reformation, called councils, wrote constitutions, and established seminaries. In so doing they undertook the threefold task of genuinely converting the Indian, combating the immorality of the whites, and maintaining high standards among the clergy themselves. This was the Golden Age. In contrast, the third period saw a decline of the Church, as many clergy succumbed to secularism, preferred the university to the mission, and doubted the wisdom of keeping Indians in reductions. Thus no simple themes of Christian Spaniard converting heathen Indian or of secular government oppressing pious Church are sustained in this work. Father Egaña sees that Spanish American civilization was in conflict with itself; nonetheless the Church accomplished its enormous task.

The author develops his subject by brief treatments of episcopates and archepiscopates, chronologically and regionally arranged within the broad periods mentioned. Essays on the land, the Indian, the missions, and the general cultural development round out the picture. The result is a highly detailed and convincing account of the Church. Father Egaña, a member of the Jesuits' Historical Institute at Rome and author of several monographs on the South American church, treats impartially all orders and the secular clergy. Each had its