

*New Patterns in Old Mexico. A Study of Town and Metropolis.* By NORMAN S. HAYNER and UNA MIDDLETON HAYNER. New Haven, 1966. College and University Press. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Pp. 316. \$6.00.

*The Caribbean: Mexico Today.* Edited by A. CURTIS WILGUS. Gainesville, 1964. University of Florida Press. Index. Pp. xxii, 232. \$7.50.

If a single word could describe the contemporary Mexican scene, that word would be "ambivalence." Few students of the historical, social, and economic development of Mexico since the Revolution can avoid the conclusion that progress is a fact, but that alongside the modern world radiating from Mexico City lives a population that has not even vicariously tasted the fruits of success. To paraphrase Pablo González Casanova's controversial book, *La democracia en México*, modern and colonial Mexico are two facets of the same people.

Norman S. Hayner's *New Patterns in Old Mexico*, a semi-popular, social-anthropological study that contrasts life in Mexico City with Oaxaca and its hinterland, takes the aforementioned ambivalence as its theme. Mexico, Hayner writes in a moment of exuberance, "is no longer an underdeveloped country but is in transition toward an advanced position among the nations of the world" (p. 30). However, in the next paragraph he acknowledges that "hundreds of hamlets in Mexico . . . still use the ox-carts and wooden plows introduced in the sixteenth century by Cortés and his conquering soldiers" (p. 30). He says that harsh economic facts must temper the euphoria of the last three decades. Citing the Mexican economist Ifigenia M. de Navarette, Hayner points out that between the years 1950 and 1957 the average real family income rose twenty-three percent but was poorly distributed geographically and by classes. While the most-favored forty percent of the population—especially in Mexico City—had the lion's share of the new benefits, the least-favored saw their real income decline by twenty percent. In summary, there is reason to suspect that fifty years after the Revolution the gulf between the poor and the rich—one of the traditional evils of Porfirian Mexico which the upheaval of 1910 promised to eradicate—survives and may even have grown.

*The Caribbean: Mexico Today*, a collection of papers delivered at the Fourteenth Conference on the Caribbean at Gainesville and edited by A. Curtis Wilgus, covers many of the same themes discussed by Hayner and adds sections on politics, culture, and international

affairs. Both Mexicans and Americans have contributed to the volume of essays, including an American executive of General Electric who writes that his company is in Mexico, among other reasons, because Mexico "still . . . believes in the system of free enterprise" (p. 108)—an eccentric commentary on the meaning of "revolution" in Mexico.

The contributors to *Mexico Today*, in contrast with Hayner's more detailed analysis, have stressed the general character of the national problems, putting less emphasis on the ambivalence of Mexican development and more on progress. For Ward M. Morton, to cite one example, the Mexican political system has functioned remarkably well since 1929. His defense of the PRI is certain to please even doctrinaire *prístas*. Critics of the PRI are classified as either extremists of the right—the PNM, PARM, etc.—or the left—the MLN and *Política*. All other Mexicans supposedly back the PRI; yet countless Mexican moderates will tell you that the PRI survives for lack of political alternatives. Political "stability" in Mexico may result not from the strength but from the weakness of the Mexican political system and from public apathy and a cynical attitude towards government. But not all of the authors are equally optimistic. In the field of economics Robert J. Shafer warns that Mexican metallic minerals can no longer rely on the international market, while Marvin D. Bernstein cautions that Mexico has reached "a plateau in her headlong drive toward Rostow's take-off point" (p. 117). To increase the gross national product will be more difficult in the future.

In short, the two books discuss nearly every aspect of contemporary Mexico. The resulting picture, in particular that of Hayner, shows an ambivalent Mexico where both progress and the unchanging patterns of yesteryear exist together. Most Mexicans, Frank Tannenbaum concludes, are "no longer ashamed of being Mexican" (p. 49); yet nearly all Mexicans would probably concede that a majority of their countrymen have not shared equally the joys of success. In fact, one of the striking paradoxes of American scholarly opinion on Mexico and that of the Mexicans themselves—outside of the "establishment" or when writing for foreign consumption—is that Americans often lavished praise on the "Mexican success story" while Mexicans frequently indulge in bitter denunciations of present-day inequities. In his study Hayner has repeatedly broken with that pattern; but with some exceptions the scholars of *Mexico Today* confirm it.

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