

*The X in Mexico. Growth within Tradition.* By IRENE NICHOLSON. Garden City, 1965. Doubleday and Company. Illustrations. Maps. Appendices. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xii, 295. \$4.95.

Through several generations of scholarship, teaching, and even concerted proselytizing, the historical profession has finally convinced the layman that it may be dangerous to analyze contemporary societal problems with little or no reference to their past development. This realization carries mixed blessings. Much as the geographer has learned to live with the historian's naïve introductory chapter on "The Land and the People," the historian eventually will have to force himself to tolerate the nonprofessional presentation of the historical background. If the layman chooses to devote a substantial portion of his work to historical development, however, he must be prepared to stand some historical criticism.

Irene Nicholson, an English journalist with sixteen years of residence in Mexico, begins her study with seventy-five pages of introduction to Mexican prehistory and history. Only her enthusiasm manages to carry her through this first quarter of the book. In the course of the first seventy-five pages she is guilty of almost all of the historical transgressions against which the history graduate student is warned in his first research seminar. For example, she has used evidence improperly and mishandled footnotes. (Octavio Paz, with all his erudition, has yet to establish himself as an authority on the independence of New Spain, pp. 54-55.) Her periodization is questionable and her transitions awkward. ("If we turn back to the early days . . ." p. 38, and "Back in the government in 1831 . . ." p. 61.) She has grossly oversimplified. ("The habit of expecting something for nothing started with Nuño [de Guzmán]," p. 39. Cuauhtémoc was taken along on the march to Honduras because he behaved with dignity during his trial, pp. 33-34.) She has committed basic errors of fact. (Victoriano Huerta was arrested when he tried to return to the United States after his exile in Spain, p. 70.) She has left glaring inconsistencies within the narrative. (Cortés loses two hundred men without explanation between the bottom of p. 32 and the top of p. 33.) Despite the many errors, however, it is apparent that the author does understand the essence of Mexican history. She simply is not a professional historian.

Once having laid the historical background to rest, the author devotes herself to a topical analysis of Mexican political dynamics and foreign relations, economic problems, the development of the arts, and the contemporary social scene. It is in these sections that Nichol-

son makes her contribution, partly because she can rely upon the backlog of her own Mexican experience. Her observations on village life in Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Guerrero and her commentaries on the status of women in contemporary Mexico are quite incisive. Lest one receive the impression of a travelogue, however, it should be noted that the chapters on political and economic life are handled with considerable sophistication and a good command of the factual data. Her treatment of Mexican literature, architecture, painting, and sculpture constitutes an excellent introduction.

*The X in Mexico* is not designed for classroom use. On the other hand the Mexicanist who is often asked by friends for a suitable English introduction to the area might well keep this title in mind.

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*Historia de las divisiones territoriales de México.* 3rd ed. By EDMUNDO O'GORMAN. México, 1966. Editorial Porrúa. Maps. Notes. Appendix. Bibliography. Indices. Pp. 326. Cloth. \$28.00 (Mex.). Paper. \$20.00 (Mex.).

Many years ago, O'Gorman contributed to the reviewer's dissertation on Guadalupe Victoria by insisting that it emphasize the importance of geography on Victoria's activities. O'Gorman asserted that territorial divisions make a valid approach to political history, and his many subsequent works have emphasized that point.

In the third edition of his *Historia de las divisiones territoriales de México*, he has produced a successful *ménage à trois* consisting of a historical introduction, a series of maps, and key documents concerning various periods in Mexican history. His historical résumé does not intrude on his major thesis; it is illuminating and to the point. The maps make an invaluable contribution, as they are clearly drawn, topical, and clarifying. The documents are pertinent and include colonial material and political tidbits such as the Bases of Election of New Congresses in 1823, Poinsett's abortive treaty with Mexico based on the Florida treaty of 1819, Texas' declaration of independence, the Mesilla treaty legitimatizing the Gadsden Purchase, and many other important ones, including a few that deal with aspects of the Revolution of 1910.

The book also includes a chronological index of significant laws dating back to 1525 and including many of the Juárez reforms. A good geographical index, a bibliography, and a list of important persons complete the book.

Since O'Gorman obviously wanted to emphasize the political and