

dedicated discipleship of the advocates of abolitionism, etc. His book is not a profound study, but it is a useful overall consideration of the importance that positivist theories had in the formation of modern Brazil, reaching down as they did into the first Vargas administration.

The author refers at some length to the influence of Comte's thought on Irineu Evangelista de Souza, Baron and Viscount Mauá, the great Brazilian entrepreneur and banker of the empire. Undoubtedly, Mauá was convinced of the rightness of the new sociological views, though perhaps he was more influenced by Comte's predecessor, Saint Simon, than by Comte himself. Also, it was undoubtedly true that in his early years Mauá, who came from Rio Grande do Sul himself, actively supported his fellow gauchos in their unsuccessful rebellion against the imperial government. But perhaps the author of the present study exaggerates Mauá's subsequent political activities. Only insofar as politics become involved necessarily in his business enterprises can Mauá be said in his later years to have been engaged in real political action, though he was often at loggerheads with the traditionalism and vested interest in the status quo displayed by his contemporaries.

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*O ciclo de Vargas. Volume I: 1922. Sangue na areia de Copacabana.*  
By HÉLIO SILVA. Rio de Janeiro, 1964. Editora Civilização Brasileira. Illustrations. Notes. Index. Pp. 562. Paper. \$5.000 (Braz.).

It is axiomatic among historians of Latin America that reliable and scholarly works about the most recent period—particularly since the turn of the century—are in short supply. The principal reason advanced by laymen and specialists alike is that events of the recent past involve the living, many of whom are in powerful positions from which they could direct reprisals against those whom they might consider injurious. Traditionally historians in Latin America have chosen to deal with the relatively "safer" periods of history, particularly the colonial period.

For this reason Latin Americanists in general and Brazilianists in particular should welcome this first installment of a projected multivolume historical treatment of the period from 1922 to 1964, most aptly entitled *O ciclo de Vargas*. The technical apparatus of this volume is impressive, all the more so because this is so often absent in Brazilian and other Hispanic American historiography. There is a useful chronology of events dealt with, beginning with

1898 and ending with 1926. An index facilitates identification of leading personalities, which is particularly important when one deals with the complexities of Brazilian family names; more than one scholar has been lost in the maze of Brazilian genealogy. Lastly, over one hundred pages are devoted to important documents of the period, many of which have never appeared in printed form previously. However, they are not of uniform quality and interest, and here the editor might have exercised his red pencil to advantage.

In the introduction Silva tells us: "The history which I am going to relate possibly differs from the classical variety. It will not be a sequence of dates in an enumeration of important episodes" (p. 31). And in another place we are told: "This study is in keeping with a desire to present objective truth, which the reader will perceive, based upon the personal testimony of events witnessed by the author" (p. 36). We must judge the author on the basis of these objectives which he has set for himself, and the conclusion is unequivocally positive. Silva never claims that his study is intended to be the definitive work of the period. This study, then, is an example of highly informed, perceptive, and responsible journalism *cum* history. It should be added that the events which are narrated are almost exclusively political in nature.

The title of the volume is somewhat misleading, since the period covered stretches from 1922 through 1924. There is a straightforward narrative of political events, including the first *5 de julho* (1922), federal intervention in the state of Rio de Janeiro, the 1923 revolt in Rio Grande do Sul, the second *5 de julho* (1924), and the naval revolt on the battleship *São Paulo*. It is unfortunate, however, that there is no serious attempt to interweave these events into a more meaningful fabric, and this lack of historical interpretation is the principal defect of the volume. Occasionally in the introduction the author touches on promising insights and ideas, such as: "The Empire experimented with two governing groups: one romantic and impulsive, which gave us the Independence; the other contemplative and paternal, which made the Republic possible" (p. 38). It is a pity that such provocative remarks are not developed and tested against the historical evidence.

Perhaps the great value of volumes such as this is that they amass data with which the author and other historians can eventually essay meaningful syntheses. One hopes that synthesis will not be long delayed in this case, thanks largely to the painstaking groundwork already laid by writers such as Silva.

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