

Boxer's account of the uprising is more complete, including a summary of the thirty-eight charges leveled by the rebels against their ambitious governor. This revolution, in which the *câmara* plays a prominent role, is the dramatic high point of the century. Afterwards interest falls off until the discovery of gold.

Boxer's professional history cannot fail to afford pleasure and profit to more readers than a plodding narrative that lists events large and small as they occur from 1601 to 1700. But for the scholar in quest of the date of the founding of the Irmandade da Misericórdia or the original site of the slaughterhouse or the arrival of the first bishop (surprisingly not until 1683), Coaracy's chronicle will be useful. It records the year-in, year-out wrangling over taxes, Indians, and real estate by the interest groups of Guanabara Bay: the municipal *câmara*, the royal governor, the ecclesiastical administrator, the chief magistrate (*ouvidor*), the Benedictines, Jesuits and other orders, the Brazil Company (*Companhia do Comércio*), the Correia de Sá family, and, less concretely, *o povo*. Yet "the people" and their "democratic spirit" that Coaracy invokes elude the reader. Only through taking sides among the disputing interests could propertyless *moradores* hope to make their influence felt. Rather, we catch glimpses of "the people" of Rio de Janeiro in menacing *quilombos*, in lepers roaming the city, and in countless others who succumb to smallpox epidemics.

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*The Hidalgo Revolt. Prelude to Mexican Independence.* By HUGH M. HAMILL, JR. Gainesville, 1966. University of Florida Press. Map. Notes. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xi, 284. \$7.50.

As every Mexicanist in the United States knows, there has been a need, longer than he can remember, for a scholarly biography in English of Miguel Hidalgo, the well-known though sometimes misunderstood parish priest of Dolores whose revolt initiated the movement for Mexican independence. This study, the product of thorough and painstaking research, fills the need in a most gratifying manner and promises to be the definitive treatment of the subject for a long time to come. Hamill deals with the controversial points in a forthright, logical manner, argues with conviction, and supplies evidence in support of his views.

Basic to an understanding of the man and the revolt were several key factors, as Hamill points out—the status and aspirations of the *criollos*, the personality of the cura, "antipathetic objectives" of the

Querétaro conspiracy; and the role of psychological warfare in winning adherents to the cause.

The importance of the creoles in the colonial social structure cannot be overstressed, for they were proud, prosperous, optimistic, ambitious, and resentful of their peers, the privileged and powerful Spanish-born *gachupines*. Moreover, in the Bajío, the area which spawned the revolt, the creoles were particularly affluent, self-sufficient, and unconcerned about the condition of the *indios laborios y vagos*, whose numbers were significantly larger than elsewhere.

Into this socio-economic complex moved Miguel Hidalgo, the brilliant intellectual and progressive, though careless, college administrator. A creole who represented many of the characteristics and frustrations of his group, he nevertheless developed an acute sense of social responsibility not shared by the bulk of his fellow creoles. In time he came to favor social as well as political revolution—contradictory objectives, as most creoles thought them—and his impetuosity, lack of organizational ability, and failure to see the implications of his actions did much to shape the course of the revolt when it came.

The conspirators at Querétaro plotted to destroy *gachupín* power, and assumed that Indian, caste, and creole would unite for this purpose. Hamill shows that the planners decided in advance on a universal revolt. He therefore takes issue with the traditional interpretation that Hidalgo's decision on September 16, 1810 was an irrational one, and that his instantaneous action determined the course of the revolt. Most creoles were shocked when they heard about the excesses of the insurrection, and thus royalist propaganda was eminently successful in retaining creole loyalty by emphasizing the revolt's anarchic and destructive character. Without creole support, the chances for success were seriously crippled; and therefore Hidalgo's decision to retreat rather than advance on Mexico City should be viewed as a symptom rather than a cause of final defeat.

Finally, Hamill disagrees with those Mexican historians who have denied the authenticity of Hidalgo's recantation because they desired primarily to present an unblemished hero. The evidence indicates that Hidalgo did abjure the revolt because he considered it a mistake, and that he died *because* of it rather than *for* it.

The failure in 1953 of the bicentenary of the birth of Miguel Hidalgo to produce a scholarly biography of the cura of Dolores has been rectified in this study. It is the most satisfactory which has yet appeared in any language.

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