

*Études sur Bartolomé de Las Casas.* By MARCEL BATAILLON. With RAYMOND MARCUS. Paris, 1965. Centre de Recherches de l'Institut d'Études Hispaniques. Notes. Index. Pp. xxxix, 344.

This book contains twelve articles which have been published during recent years in the *Bulletin Hispanique*. They have been arranged chronologically and deal with significant epochs in Las Casas' struggle for justice on behalf of the Indian population in Spanish America.

The author's approach is somewhat different from that of other *lascasianos*. Basing his studies on a critical approach of the available documents rather than on an emotional interpretation, the French scholar reveals Las Casas as a man of his time whose life as a former encomendero, a "ci-devant colon," strongly influenced his actions. This picture is opposed to the idealistic and to some extent dehumanized portrait of Las Casas drawn by some other historians. Bataillon's Las Casas is a man of flesh and blood with the weaknesses, ambitions, imperfections, and need to compromise which are part of human nature. All of this does not diminish the image of the "champion of the Indians" but makes him more human and real.

In his first articles ("Le clérigo Las Casas" and "Les Caballeros Pardos"), Bataillon discusses Las Casas' actions after his first "conversion," that is, after he renounced his encomienda. Basing his statements on documents which, as the author rightly says, have been "depuis longtemps publiés mais peu lus" (p. 2), he shows how Las Casas' earlier status as an encomendero influenced his ideas. In fact, although convinced of the right of the Indians to be treated as free men, Las Casas endeavored to rationalize their exploitation or, shall we say, their integration with Spanish-American society. He does not challenge the right of the Spaniards to stay in America and progress or that of the crown to obtain economic gain from its American venture. The author corrects the erroneous belief that the agreement between Las Casas and the crown for the peaceful conquest of Paria was a democratic project. On the contrary. The fifty "*caballeros pardos*" were chosen from the "best" encomenderos in La Española. Every Spanish peasant was to be given Indians for labor, and high revenues were to go to the crown. Las Casas' project concerning the Indians of the Lucayos Islands is similar. If suitable for Spanish settlement, Spanish peasants would be installed to take advantage of the Indian labor; if not, the Indians would be deported to more satisfactory islands. Thus the traditional sort of rational class society would be created, somewhat similar to that of Spain: a nobility (*caballeros pardos*), a middle class (Spanish peasants), and the "pueblo" (Indian work-

ing-class). What Las Casas opposed—and he was not the first—was the annihilation of the Indians.

The second “conversion” of Las Casas—from a clergyman to a friar—opened a new stage in his life, that of a missionary, whose principal concern was to convert the Indian population. In “*De unico vocationis modo*” (1535-36) he argued that the only admissible Christian way to convert the Indians was by pacific means and not by war. As Bataillon points out, Las Casas’ plan was not new (pp. 157-158), and we know of many forerunners. The attempt to realize his idea is described in an extensive article, “La Vera Paz,” to which the French scholar adds the subtitle “roman et histoire.” He makes clear the true proportions of this event, mystified by Remesal’s admiration for his hero, and patronizing a passionate and idealistic approach to history which still persists in works on Las Casas. In reality the success of Vera Paz—previously called Tierra de Guerra—was limited. Yet when Las Casas left for Spain, he exaggerated his achievements. He wrote the *Brevísima relación*, a highly explosive sermon like his earlier *De unico vocationis modo*. He published his *Remedios*, in which he criticized the encomienda as an impediment to the conversion of the Indians. In his *Parecer* he advocated state control of discovery and colonization as the best way to achieve the true aim of colonization, which was the conversion of the Indians. According to Bataillon, in 1542 Las Casas was just one of many persons in the royal entourage who considered that it was high time to put American problems in order.

Las Casas’ activities at court were recognized and crowned by his elevation to the See of Chiapa. Was he really ambitious to be a bishop? He might have thought that as a bishop he would be better able to realize the principles which he preached on Indian problems. It is also possible that he was personally ambitious for the dignity—Bataillon believes he was—as would only be natural for any man choosing an ecclesiastic career. But his failure in Chiapa and his defeat by the encomenderos and the colonial authorities must have shown him that American problems could not be solved by sermonizing alone. This conviction produced, in my opinion, this third “conversion”—from preacher and missionary to politician at the court of Spain. He corresponded with Church and civil authorities in Spain and also with churchmen in America as their confidant and counselor, and they became his informers on American reality.

A new contribution to Las Casas literature is the introduction, in which the author disputes those of his critics who consider that a historian must take sides for or against a historic personality, and who

were shocked by the author's affirmation "que Las Casas n'était ni un apôtre ni un saint, à proprement parler" (p. xiii). However, the larger part of this introduction is devoted to the refutation of ideas expressed by Ramón Menéndez Pidal in his last book, *El padre Las Casas, su doble personalidad* (Madrid, 1963). Of this book Bataillon writes: "The error of Don Ramón may have consisted in obstinately writing a book about a great man whom he did not like; a book whose guiding ideas have been largely refuted by recent research on colonial America in general and on Las Casas in particular" (p. xxxix).

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*The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594. The Explorations of Chamuscado, Espejo, Castaño de Sosa, Morlete, and Leyva de Bonilla and Humaña.* By GEORGE P. HAMMOND and AGAPITO REY. Albuquerque, 1966. University of New Mexico Press. Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940. Maps. Notes. Index. Pp. xiv, 341. \$12.50.

With this volume the authors have completed one of the most important trilogies in the history of the Spanish Southwest. Together with their *Narratives of the Coronado Expedition* and *Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico*, Hammond and Rey have now presented all the known basic documents on the origin of New Mexico's history. Many of them are new, excepting those of Núñez.

Bandelier, Bolton, Mecham, and others (including Hammond and Rey themselves), who made earlier studies of these materials, did not have the results of recent investigations at hand. The latter include not only their own immense research on Coronado, Oñate, and Obregón's *History*, but studies of the University of New Mexico, and the Museum of New Mexico and its two organizations, the School of American Research and the Laboratory of Anthropology at Santa Fe, as well as other pertinent specialized studies in both anthropology and history. Thus at many points the authors have made valuable corrections of explorers' routes, the location of Indian groups, and accounts of the Pueblos. Not unimportant is the emphasis which they give to the 1573 laws aimed to end lawless frontier expeditions. Their conclusions are clearly stated throughout the sixty-three-page Introduction, in which they survey the expeditions of Chamuscado, Espejo, Castaño, Morlete, Leyva, and Humaña.

Only on one small point does the reviewer wish to raise a question. He believes that the authors (like Schroeder and Matson) have dismissed too lightly Alessio Robles' statement regarding Castaño's