

Zapata and Villa lacked. At Aguascalientes in the Revolutionary Convention he proved to be “a reasonable man and a peacemaker” (p. 250). And as Carranza’s secretary of war, he gave decisive support to the radical reformers of the Constituent Congress. By 1920 he was the sole logical presidential candidate. Because Carranza refused to recognize Obregón’s claim, the First Chief lost his control of revolutionary politics and, ultimately, his own life.

Hall’s fine book, important as it is, marks only the “first step,” as she admits, in detailing Obregón’s contributions to Mexico’s growth in the twentieth century. We can look forward to the completion of the study, with a concluding volume on the Sonoran caudillo’s term of office, 1920–24, on the national conciliation that brought together Carrancistas, Villistas, and Zapatistas, on the cultural florescence, and on the efforts of Obregón and Calles to institutionalize Mexican politics. Despite Obregón’s assassination in 1928, his and Calles’s effort led to the solidification of the modern “revolutionary” coalition that governs the Republic today.

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*La lucha por la hegemonía en México, 1968–1980.* By MIGUEL BASÁÑEZ. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1981. Notes. Figures. Appendixes. Bibliography. Pp. 243. Paper.

This is the most insightful, comprehensive, and objective analysis of Mexican politics by a Mexican since Pablo González Casanova published *Democracy in Mexico* in 1965. It is all the more remarkable because the author, although a law graduate with a degree in public administration, and a candidate for a Ph.D. in political science, is a middle-level employee of the Ministry of the Presidency. Basáñez demonstrates clearly that the young Mexican technocrat can offer useful, critical perspectives on his own political system.

The author provides a thorough survey of North American and Mexican interpretations of the role of the Mexican state, suggesting three possibilities: neutral, compromised, or contradictory. Basáñez comes down on the side of the theory of a contradictory state. The rest of the book is devoted to analyses and arguments in support of his interpretation. Although covering the years since 1940, this work particularly focuses on the years 1968 to 1980, a period neglected in United States scholarship.

In leading up to the events of 1968, Basáñez examines three sectors critical to public-policy formulation in Mexico: the public sector, the private sector, and a “dissident” sector. His examination of the public

sector suggests that it is divided into three factions: politicians, technicians, and specialists. He argues that these groups control certain government agencies. The separation between *políticos* and *Técnicos* in Mexican political analysis is currently in vogue, but Basáñez goes beyond this dual separation to establish criteria for a third group, the specialists. Essentially he uses *técnicos* as synonymous with economists, whereas he sees specialists strongly represented in such diverse institutions as Pemex, the public universities, and the army.

His careful analysis of the public sector is carried over to the private sector, where he again examines three factions: entrepreneurs, foreign investors, and financiers. Also, he explores their organizational affiliations, interest representatives, and the consequences of these ties among private-sector interests and their relationships with the state. His most original theoretical contribution is his argument that a third sector, a "dissident" sector, has as much importance as the private and public sectors. Within this dissident category, which does not have the natural logic shared by the other two, he lumps together opposition parties, the universities, and writers (really intellectuals). There is nothing original about classifying opposition parties as organizations of dissent, but Basáñez is the first general political analyst to give importance to the Mexican universities and to intellectuals in the context of their larger political role. Both subjects, especially intellectuals, have generally been excluded from North American scholarship.

Basáñez's arguments are not always fully developed, and his interpretations are subject to criticism, but his conclusion that the state is contradictory, that it has functioned in both authoritarian and nonauthoritarian capacities, provides evidence to support the revisionist notion that Mexico's political system is indeed unique and that it does not readily fit into an authoritarian model.

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*The Challenge of Venezuelan Democracy.* By JOSÉ ANTONIO GIL YEPES. Translated by EVELYN HARRISON I., LOLÓ GIL DE YANES, and DANIELLE SALTÍ. Foreword by JOHN D. MARTZ. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1981. Tables. Notes. Figures. Index. Pp. 280. Cloth. \$19.95.

Pity the poor Venezuelan businessman. He is misunderstood, unjustly slandered, and kept at arm's length in the process of making and