

as they might have been, all at once. In this sense, members of the Socialist and Communist parties, as well as other Popular Unity coalition members and more “revolutionary” leftists outside the coalition, all contributed to the ultimate confrontation with external and internal opponents—and the tragedy that ensued after September 11, 1973.

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*Guzmán Blanco. La dinámica de la política del septenio.* By MARY B. FLOYD. Caracas: Instituto Autónomo/Biblioteca Nacional, 1988. Notes. Appendix. Index. Pp. 264. Paper.

As the first major work published by a professional historian on Antonio Guzmán Blanco, this not-very-fortunate Spanish translation of an unrevised doctoral dissertation is nonetheless a needed contribution. The internal politics of the Septenio, Guzmán Blanco's first period of government (1870–77), is here viewed as a watershed which ended, if only for these years, political factionalism and the constant search for attaining national order and progress. Floyd starts by reviewing the political forces in conflict since the 1830s, emphasizing Guzmán's political apprenticeship, first with his father, the Liberal leader Antonio Leocadio Guzmán, then as a soldier during the Federal War (1858–63) and as vice-president and high-ranking official in the Federalist government (1863–68). Chapters III–V discuss the political arrangements of the Septenio. Chapter VI treats the *antiguzmancista* reaction after the Septenio, ending with Guzmán's reinstatement in 1879. The last chapter offers a brief conclusion.

The book's focus is on Guzmán's alliance with the mercantile and financial elite (institutionalized in the *Compañía de Crédito*, the financial device organized to permit this group to administer custom duties revenue); on the fragile relationship with the *hacendados*; and on the mechanisms whereby Guzmán curbed separatist *caudillos* and imposed a strong, interventionist government. Thus, as Floyd accurately concludes, Guzmán's avowed federalism was no more than lip service paid to a lost cause.

The book has various shortcomings. The unprofessional citation of the sources from the *Archivo Guzmán Blanco* (some 100,000 documents in the *Fundación Boulton*), on which the book relies in part, is inexplicable. Documents are referred to by the date, as in “AGB, 7 de Octubre de 1872”; even worse, note 26 (p. 160) reads: “AGB, various documents,” and note 55 (p. 130) says: “AGB.” Although the central topics are well chosen, a thorough examination of Guzmán's program is lacking, and deeper consideration would have enhanced the analysis. Full citation in the notes is unaccompanied by bibliography and sources (included in the dissertation). The appendix contains a short and hastily made comment on the

Venezuelan archives, which in some respects is now outdated. For example, the AGB has been professionally organized, and although access has been restricted, historians hope this will be only transitory because of the paramount importance of this archive for nineteenth-century Venezuelan history. Finally, Guzmán's long message to the Congress in 1877 is included, without explaining its relevance.

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*So Far From Heaven: David Alfaro Siqueiros' The March of Humanity and Mexican Revolutionary Politics.* By LEONARD FOLGARAIT. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xiv, 140. Cloth.

Siqueiros survived the two other outstanding artists of Mexico's age of murals. He, Diego Rivera, and José Clemente Orozco used walls to present, explain, and promote the Mexican Revolution's view of the past, conception of the future, and promise to the people. Politics and art provided different expressions of the same revolutionary Mexican reality. Because he survived longest, Siqueiros's artistic explanations changed the most. His largest work, "The March of Humanity," and the Polyforum presented the Mexico of the 1960s and closed the nation's period of murals.

Folgarait adopts deconstruction to find the reality back of "The March of Humanity" and the Partido Revolucionario Institucional. He insists that that mural cannot be evaluated as simply the reflection of the PRI's bankruptcy, but that the two must be understood as simultaneous expressions of the same Mexican reality. Both, for example, have reduced the Mexican to a spectator, rather than a participant, in national life: the perspectives, architecture, and panel-like quality of "The March of Humanity" force a person to stand, without moving, in the middle of the Polyforum and to remain a spectator there. The PRI's control of nominations, elections, and administrations does exactly the same.

The ironies jolt the imagination. Siqueiros, fresh from prison as a critic of the regime and most visible member of the Mexican Communist party, accepted the patronage of conservative industrialist Manuel Suárez and, later, of the government. The mural had the foreign tourist as its projected audience, so it is enclosed and can be seen only by purchasing a ticket; the Mexican people were thus unable to view and admire it from the street for free. Its contents abandon nationalism, the country's past, and the revolution's promises, and in their place offer internationalism, the march toward a better world in the distant future, and the depersonalization of events. Anyone interested in Mexican murals and the use of deconstructionist heuristics will find this a stimulating exposition.

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