

Modernization, whether economic or cultural, some critics argued, could lead to decadence, rebellion, or other potential disruptions. Throughout *Eliten und Fortschritt*, Gerdes skillfully relates these warnings and fears to the larger historical context of the roles of state and elite, the search for national and cultural identity, and the intrusion of foreign influences on traditional attitudes. In the final section Gerdes speculates on how a more open and democratic system will affect the link between progress and lifestyles. The rise of the bourgeoisie could pose a challenge to the elite as the arbiter of Venezuela's cultural life.

*Eliten und Fortschritt* is written from interviews, newspapers and journal articles, and secondary works on politics, economics, culture, and society. It represents a synthesis rather than an original inquiry. The findings from dozens of interviews with contemporary Venezuelans are used throughout the book. It would have been helpful if Gerdes had explained how the interviews were structured, what questions were asked, and how the responses were weighted for accuracy and relevance. Still, this work offers a challenging perspective on the process and effect of change as traditional societies undergo modernization. It deserves the wider audience that a Spanish translation will bring.

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*La revolución francesa en México.* By SOLANGE ALBERRO, ALICIA HERNÁNDEZ CHÁVEZ, and ELÍAS TRABULSE. Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1992. Notes. Index. 287 pp. Paper.

The 15 essays in this book, the result of a colloquium on the French Revolution and its influences in Mexico, are of varying caliber. Some of them are mature, others not; some are startlingly innovative, others not; some relate directly to the subject of the book, others hardly at all. There are two opening chapters. The one by Silvio Zavala is mystifying; it deals with various French writers and the author's personal encounters with France, and contains a bibliographical supplement considerably longer than the article. The one by François Furet, on the historiography of the French Revolution, seems a highly significant commentary on modern French authors' views, but it does not relate in any way to Mexico.

The longest section of the book, comprising seven essays, concerns Mexican independence. Nearly all the essays, consciously or not, raise the problem of evidence in any attempt to establish realistic links between the French Revolution and Mexican independence. Carlos Herrejón Peredo admits that there is no direct link between the two events in the subject he is studying (church sermons), but avers that it was on everyone's mind nevertheless. María del Refugio González insists that the main elements Mexico inherited from the French Revolution were the concepts of sovereignty of the nation, constitutionalism, and religious tolerance (though there is little evidence of the third in this period), while arguing that the creole response to the crisis of 1808 was inspired primarily by Hispanic

thought rather than French. Ernesto de la Torre Villar enumerates sections of direct influence in the 1814 Constitution of Apatzingán, but also notes the many Spanish influences at work, conceding that the French Revolution was more a reinforcement than an initiating factor. Jaime E. Rodríguez O. takes the most direct comparative approach in the book, in a highly original essay that compares and contrasts the two events. Though some of the similarities he sees are not fully convincing, the article is an impressive reassertion of the significance of independence. Other papers are by Dorothy Tanck de Estrada, Elías Trabulse, and Anne Staples.

While these authors seem unable to substantiate direct linkages, those in the third section of the book, focusing on nineteenth-century Mexican liberalism, have no difficulty. Antonia Pi-Suñer Llorens (on the Mexican periodical *Le Trait d'Union* of René Masson), Andrés Lira (on Justo Sierra), and Nicole Giron (on Ignacio Altamirano) deal with individuals who spoke and wrote extensively about such influences. The final two essays are by Jean-Pierre Bastian (on secret societies in the 1880s and after) and Gloria Villegas Moreno (on the French Revolution as a paradigm for the early 1900s in Mexico).

To my taste, by far the most arresting article in the collection is that by Moisés González Navarro on the typology of Mexican conservatism, from Lucas Alamán to Justo Sierra to the PRI of the 1970s. It has almost nothing to do with the French Revolution, but a great deal to do with the development of a unique Mexican tradition of conservatism among those who had the most to lose. The tendency is both subtle and proactive; and it argues that gradualism is the same thing as revolution. It is a brilliant solution, quickly sketched in a brilliant article that all students of contemporary Mexico should read.

This book delivers both less and more than its title promises. On the issue of what direct influences exist between the French Revolution and Mexican history, outside of those that are universal to Western culture, it is disappointing—probably because, as María del Refugio González cogently puts it, historians cannot agree on what the French Revolution means. As a tentative foray into how Mexican culture has resisted, or at least tempered, the radical impulse, it is well worth noticing.

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*Marxism and Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico.* By BARRY CARR. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xiii, 437 pp. Cloth. \$49.50.

Barry Carr can be a perceptive historian, as his essay on Sonora testifies. Unlike many of his cohorts of the Cold War era, he never equated Marxism with the devil or labeled all Communist parties lackeys of Moscow. They could act inde-