

ern social science disciplines, with their critical approach to the reality of Mexico; pointing out, for example, the role of historian Daniel Cosío Villegas and his disciples at the Colegio de México, and that of sociologist Lucio Mendieta y Núñez at UNAM.

Lempérière also provides a careful assessment of the work of Octavio Paz, including a discourse analysis of his *Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950, 1962). For her, Paz's literary career epitomizes the new situation of Mexican writers by the end of the 1950s, shaped by the expansion of an urban, educated market of readers and by the impact of new ideas and trends from abroad. Among other things, these factors allowed the writers to recover their older, nineteenth-century role as cultural mediators. The book's last three chapters discuss the rise of leftism in intellectual circles after 1960 and the politicization of university life that preceded the tragic, Cardenist-inspired protest movement of 1968. Lempérière reassesses the significance of the latter, seeing it as a precursor of the civic movements that, since the 1970s, have sought to pluralize Mexican political life.

In sum, Lempérière's work embodies not only an impressive piece of scholarship, based on a variety of primary sources of twentieth-century Mexican thought, but also (especially if and when it is translated for English readers) a valuable view of how Mexicans constructed nationalism, only to escape, finally, from its intellectual prison.

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*The Deterioration of the Mexican Presidency: The Years of Luis Echeverría.* By SAMUEL SCHMIDT. Edited and translated by DAN A. COTHRAN. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991. Tables. Figures. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xxviii, 222 pp. Cloth. \$37.50.

Mexico has undergone severe economic and political stress over the last 25 years. The economy has sprung forward and collapsed backward in conjunction with changes in the world petroleum market and international interest rates. Inflation has eroded the income of salary earners. Political repression, including the use of the army and fascist street thugs against students and other demonstrators, has been followed by tentative steps toward multiparty pluralism and tolerance. All of these forces have weakened the authority of the president.

This book focuses on the presidency of Luis Echeverría, the years 1970–1976. Echeverría came into office on the heels of the Díaz Ordaz disaster and failed to reverse the decline. After promising change, he reverted to violence to repress guerrilla groups and others suspected of terrorist activity. He did not widen the scope of political participation. He failed to rectify the maldistribution of income, proved unable to develop internal markets, and allowed the expatriation of profits by foreign concerns. Yet he attacked the beneficiaries of these contradictions in his

public utterances. In doing so he managed to alienate almost everyone. However, the author softens his criticism by acknowledging that all of the problems preceded Echeverría and continued unresolved under the leadership of future presidents.

Samuel Schmidt demonstrates Echeverría's failure to deliver a program consistent with his "anti-imperialist" and social democratic rhetoric. Yet he also uses the years of Echeverría's regime to advantage in offering the reader useful insights on the Mexican political process. Before Díaz Ordaz, Schmidt argues, all Mexican presidents had backgrounds in popular politics; thereafter, they came from the bureaucracy. Despite the book's title, the author does not really blame Echeverría for the long-term decline in the status of the office. He sees that decline in the context of a more complex process; but at the same time he is severely critical: ". . . because of personal flaws and the opposition of the bourgeoisie, [Echeverría] achieved only extended confrontation, destabilization of the economy, repressive pacification, and alienation of the regime's allies in all sectors of society" (frontispiece).

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*The Decline of Community in Zinacantán: Economy, Public Life, and Social Stratification, 1960–1987.* By FRANK CANCIAN. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992. Photographs. Maps. Tables. Figures. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xix, 300 pp. Cloth. \$42.50.

The municipality of Zinacantán, located in the central highlands of Chiapas, Mexico, very likely has been the most intensely studied rural community in Mexico over the past three decades. Thanks to the Harvard Chiapas Project and its director, Evon Vogt, a number of dedicated anthropologists have devoted decades to the study of myths, gossip, humor, oral tradition, religious hierarchies, shamanism, settlement patterns, land use, corn farming, ethnic and class relations, courtship and marriage, local history, and more in Zinacantán; its neighbor, Chamula; and other indigenous communities. Few researchers know Zinacantán better than Frank Cancian, the author of two earlier books on the community, who now explains how Zinacantán has changed since he first began his research in the early 1960s.

Cancian announces his thesis in the title of his new book. By decline of community, Cancian means a decline of the closed, corporate peasant community. During the 1970s and 1980s, Zinacantecos found new and more lucrative occupations, the gap between richer and poorer increased, public life became more decentralized (as new hamlets were created, new offices proliferated in hamlets, and hamlets became more independent of the center, Hteklum), open political conflict divided the community, and the cargo system declined as a marker of status. Cancian describes these changes in a careful and detailed manner, and this description is the