

core of his study. Explanation is another matter. As the author notes: "I believe it is possible to be clear about what happened in Zinacantán, and not so clear about how to interpret it" (p. 200).

Rather than force his data into one neat, theoretical approach, Cancian believes that several frameworks (modernization, Marxism, the historical visions of Eric Wolf and G. William Skinner) should be used to interpret Zinacantán. He shows how each provides insights regarding specific problems of explanation. Cancian ends his study with two conclusions: outside change transformed the work and economic well-being of Zinacantecos, but social life in the community responded largely to local interactions. For those less interested in Zinacantán itself, Cancian explains that what happened there during these years is one example of how a local system relates to larger regional, national, and global systems. In this case "it becomes possible to say that the causal effects of the national and international systems are greater in economic life and less in social life, and that the importance of the local system is greater in social life and less in economic life" (p. 202).

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Soldiers of the Virgin: The Moral Economy of a Colonial Maya Rebellion. By KEVIN GOSNER. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992. Maps. Tables. Appendixes. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. xiv, 227 pp. Cloth. \$29.95.

With this work, Kevin Gosner contributes to a growing body of literature dealing with the varied experiences of Maya peoples under Spanish colonial rule. His regional focus is highland Chiapas, his principal objective to situate in cultural and historical context the native rebellion that occurred there in the early eighteenth century. Indeed, the elaborate fixing of context consumes Gosner's talents for five dexterously woven chapters; only chapter 6 (38 pages in all) reconstructs case particulars of the uprising from archival and published sources. An ornate context certainly reflects Gosner's impressive knowledge of current thinking in Mesoamerican anthropology and history, and other fields as well. It also allows what he has unearthed about the insurrection to be examined and placed in a complex, nuanced framework. His book's structure, however, holds the reader not in narrative suspense but in narrative suspension, and when empirical findings are finally revealed, the frustrating sensation is of too little, too late. This is indeed a pity, for Gosner's subject is of crucial importance in helping to discern the fine line between resistance and revolt that still charges ethnic relations between the Maya and their oppressors, whether in highland Chiapas or in neighboring Guatemala.

Gosner renders his version of the Tzeltal Revolt differently from those articulated by, among others, Victoria Bricker, Severo Martínez Peláez, Herbert Klein, and Robert Wasserstrom. Gosner casts his in the concept of "moral economy" perhaps best associated with the work of E. P. Thompson and James C. Scott. This concept, asserts Gosner, "by focusing on the construction of social norms,

the development of a principle of reciprocity, and the symbolic expression of community values, offers important insights for linking the rebellion to Maya culture history" (p. 163). He locates "the root cause of the 1712 uprising" in "the erosion of the highland Maya's security of subsistence by the escalating demands of civil and ecclesiastical authorities" (p. 68). Geography, especially a paltry natural resource base, condemned highland Chiapas to marginal economic status in the Spanish scheme of empire, a status that allowed Maya communities to shape for themselves, in the course of the seventeenth century, a culture of refuge relatively immune to the worst of Spanish depredations.

The exceptions to this neglected existence were the system of forced sales known as the *repartimiento de mercancías* and the *visitas*, tours of inspection during which the native devout were expected to replenish depleted church coffers. Civil and pastoral abuse, the former epitomized by Governor Martín González de Vergara, the latter by Bishop Bautista Álvarez de Toledo, eventually ripped to shreds the delicate accord of the moral economy. When abuse was coupled with an orthodox rigidity that interpreted Maya religious visions strictly as the work of the devil—a statue of San Sebastián was observed to perspire, an image of San Pedro radiated light, and the Virgin made not one but two separate appearances—unrest ignited into open revolt.

Gosner depicts the key events eloquently. With Cancuc as their political center, and a young woman who had seen the Virgin as their spiritual inspiration, 21 Tzotzil as well as Tzeltal communities challenged Spanish colonial rule in a four-month rebellion that saw atrocities committed on both sides. Gosner points out that some five to six thousand "soldiers of the Virgin" slaughtered other Mayas who did not join the uprising, only to suffer dreadful retribution when Spanish might again prevailed. With the old order back in place, of necessity more brutal than before, the Tzeltal Revolt would come to feed Spanish and, later, Mexican fears and would become a consummate, if sullied, symbol of Maya resistance.

"The volume and variety of material available to scholars concerning the rebellion . . . make a detailed study of its complexities possible and positively invite competing interpretations," Gosner acknowledges (p. 12). Welcome though his contribution is, it will surprise no one, least of all Gosner himself, if other researchers consult the same documentation and come up with a markedly different account.

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Transformation and Struggle: Cuba Faces the 1990s. Edited by SANDOR HALEBSKY and JOHN M. KIRK. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xxvi, 291 pp. Paper. \$17.95.

Given the pace of change in the formerly socialist bloc, any book on contemporary Cuba will be out of date before it is printed. Though this volume of essays by 22