

clause in eighteenth-century style, have been brought to relatively short crisp statements. The subtlety remains; this is prose that one must read carefully, but one reads with pleasure and quicker understanding.

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Problemas de la formación del estado y de la nación en Hispanoamérica. Edited by INGE BUISSON, GÜNTER KAHLE, HANS-JOACHIM KÖNIG, AND HORST PIETSCHMANN. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag Köln Wien, 1984. Notes. Tables. Pp. 512. Cloth.

This book contains the acts of the conference that was organized by the Instituto de Historia Ibérica y Latinoamericana at the University of Cologne in September 1983 to celebrate the bicentenary of Bolívar's birth. The book is divided into a first part which deals with the end of the colonial period and the dawning of independence, and a second part which considers the first ten years of the new states. The result is a book which contains an excellent summary of the main historiographic tendencies which have, in recent years, contributed to a critical revision of the question of state and nation in Latin American history.

In the '60s and '70s the dominance of economic history was a reaction to the excess of ideology in political history. Merits aside, this reversal produced an economic image of Latin American history, such that the structural aspect pushed to one side the consideration of processes. The authors deserve credit because they searched for a definition of the interaction between the economic and political variables. With what results? There is now general agreement that the breaking of the colonial pact with Spain modified political perspectives but not Latin American society, which continued to be colonial in both its thinking and its actions. Through the question of nation-state, today's historians are once again presented explicitly with the classic Latin American dilemma of the asymmetry between continuity and discontinuity.

Germán Carrera Damas expresses clearly a thesis about Venezuela which may be valid for the whole continent: forming a national plan required decades, at least until the '60s, and, ideologically and otherwise, concentrated the will to consolidate the existing power structures. Perhaps only Manfred Kossok moves away from this perspective by proposing a theoretical model of independence based on the concept of "revolución inconclusa" (bourgeois, of course). The other writers' contributions, despite their different themes, give the impression of starting from the idea that the decades following independence were not an anarchic phase, as once thought, but rather a stage during which the main elements of the nation-state emerged. John Lynch speaks of the caudillos as "enemigos y agentes del estado-nación," political actors with varying political and social connotations, basically opposed to the creation of state structures, but sometimes capable of perceiving national interests. The ambivalence of the caudillist phenomenon, and

thus of the military one, is also considered by Josefina Vásquez: in Mexico, the military came to control the state in the 1840s but did not succeed in militarizing it. It is interesting to note that Santa Anna failed to control the 1842 constituent assembly elections, which were won by the liberals and the federalists.

What then is the fundamental dimension of power in Latin America during the nineteenth century? Undoubtedly the regional one. But what was its political expression within the state and to what extent did it limit the nation? For some of the writers, regionalism is a factor of great historical continuity between the colonial and liberal eras; for others, it is a result of the malfunctioning of Spanish administrative structures. While the first group of writers present the classic geoeconomic connotations of the phenomenon (although Scarlett O'Phelan Codoy reveals an interesting case of failed regionalism), the latter present the theme in political terms. Brian Hamnett observes that in Mexico any federal plan was unacceptable to the governments in the capital whether they were unitarist or federalist, and he is right. The issue then is split: aside from the traditional federalist-centralist dialectic (and that between liberals and conservatives) perhaps another one, which in the end conditions the first, exists: that between regionalism and federalism. This is convincingly proposed by Marcello Carmagnani, who compares the geoeconomic concept of regionalism to the geohistorical one of "territorialidad," with the aim of uncovering the social dimension of federalism. Basically, Carmagnani maintains that the property-owning class accepted federalism in Mexico only when the state was capable of offering adequate resources for economic development, first with the liberals and later with the Pax Porfiriana.

One last observation may encourage the reading of this book: the process of historiographic revision which is in progress on the question of state and nation has not yet succeeded in defining an analytical territory for the history of political culture. Perhaps it is not by chance that in the first part of this book there are articles on the Hispanic American enlightenment, while in the second the great theme of liberalism (or conservatism) is absent.

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ANTONIO ANNINO

Prophecy and Myth in Mexican History. By D. A. BRADING. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984. Notes. Pp. 96. Paper £4.95.

This volume contains three essays, delivered by Brading at Cambridge University between 1974 and 1984, and four shorter "Interludes" separating the essays and "framed," according to the author, "either as reviews or as preliminary drafts for a much larger work on the Mexican political tradition" (p. 1).

The first essay is entitled "St. Augustine and America: Hernán Cortés, the Franciscan Millennium and Bartolomé de las Casas." It is followed by two interludes: "Guadalupe and Quetzalcóatl" and "The Mexican Churrigueresque and