

Jesuit Student Groups, the Universidad Iberoamericana, and Political Resistance in Mexico, 1913-1979 by David Espinosa.

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 ***Jesuit Student Groups, the Universidad Iberoamericana, and Political Resistance in Mexico, 1913–1979* by David Espinosa (review)**

John W. Sherman

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REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Reviewed by:

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Jesuit Student Groups, the Universidad Iberoamericana, and Political Resistance in Mexico, 1913–1979. By David Espinosa. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 2014. Pp. xii, 196. \$55.00. ISBN 978-0-8263-5460-0.)

When Pope Leo XIII issued his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, he invited Roman Catholics to engage their faith in the sociopolitical sphere. In Mexico, this invitation was accepted by many middle-class Catholics disillusioned with the anticlericalism that had marked their nation's political evolution in the nineteenth century. It first coalesced in an organization called the Mexican Catholic Youth Association (ACJM), under the tutelage of French-born Jesuit Bernardo Bergöend. On the other side of the bloody Cristero Rebellion (1927–29), it expressed itself in the National Catholic Student Union (UNEC), which flourished in the mid-1930s in the face of resurgent governmental anticlericalism and controversial socialist and sexual education initiatives. It led ultimately, according to David Espinosa, to the creation of Mexico's Jesuit Universidad Iberoamericana.

Above all, Espinosa's insightful book is a methodical history of Mexico's premiere Catholic institution of higher learning, which drew upon the energy of the UNEC early in the 1940s. Iberoamericana had tenuous beginnings at a time when the national government exercised a near-monopoly on higher education through its domineering National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Aided by a sympathetic UNAM rector, Rodolfo Brito Foucher, Iberoamericana began merely as UNAM's University Cultural Center, but over time evolved into a full-fledged and dynamic university that has educated much of the nation's contemporary political elite. Espinosa walks the reader through this evolution, tracing its financial difficulties in the forties and fifties, and the remedy of aligning with Mexico's private sector powerbrokers. He overviews Iberoamericana's innovative curriculum and the way in which that pro-business curriculum was challenged and modified in the wake of the Second Vatican Council and the advent of liberation theology in the 1960s. Progressive Jesuits altered the social science programs and

opened a dialogue with Mexico's Marxists in that decade, which closed with the repression of a national student movement that affected organizational life at Iberoamericana into the early 1970s.

This is an excellent book, although not without shortcomings. The author tends to lose focus as he backs into his topic in the first couple of chapters. The second chapter in particular, which supposedly addresses the evolution of the ACJM preparatory to the creation of the Universidad Iberoamericana, instead slides into a predictable rehash of the Cristero Rebellion with nothing fresh—indeed, it confirms the masterful treatment of the topic by David Bailey, who **[End Page 401]** mined the National League for the Defense of Religious Liberty archive more than forty years ago (Bailey's classic *Viva Cristo Rey* [Austin, TX, 1974] is also missing from the bibliography). One wishes that, instead of such a distant backtracking into historical preliminaries, Espinosa had branched out in his mid-twentieth-century narrative to explore the formulation and struggles of Mexico's other great Catholic-inspired institution of higher education, the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara. He alludes to the UAG on occasion, but does not tap into this enticing possibility for comparative analysis. Although he allows the momentous changes of the Second Vatican Council and the 1968 meeting of the Episcopal Conference of Latin America at Medellín, Colombia, to reverberate within his story, he neglects to address some of the countercurrents in the Church. Admittedly the documentary trail of Opus Dei, for example, is hard to come by—but it and other traditionalist movements at least deserved mention, their influence on the Church in Mexico being by all accounts acute. Still, these and lesser problems notwithstanding, Espinosa's work is enlightening. It will be of interest to students of higher education, contemporary Mexican politics, university administrative history, student activism, and Roman Catholicism in Mexico. **[End Page 402]**

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function. Given their placement within the home, did the portraits speak more forcefully to family pride than to colonial identity? Despite this quibble, this fine monograph will appeal to art and religious historians of colonial Latin America.

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BRIAN LARKIN

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Jesuit Student Groups, the Universidad Iberoamericana, and Political Resistance in Mexico, 1913-1979, even if we take into account the rarefied gas that fills the space between the stars, political psychology still sporadically tastes the complex rating, based on the General theorems of mechanics.

Primitive Revolution: Restorationist Religion and the Idea of the Mexican Revolution, 1940-1968, note, according to the traditional view, uses a positive style.

Colonial Legacies: The Problem of Persistence in Latin American History, under other equal

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