

monarchy. The second and fourth chapters thus constitute a chronicle of medieval dissent. The final chapter covers the decline of papal credibility in the Babylonian Captivity and the Great Schism, and the dislocation of society due to the Black Death and peasant revolts. Despite any claims that this represents the state of the historical art, it must be noted that the preponderance of the selections reflect a preoccupation with the elite culture of the High and Later Middle Ages. Indeed, the entire conceptualization of the period's distinctiveness and the mode of organization demand such a preoccupation. Those primarily or even significantly interested in exploring the social history of the period or the impact of intercultural contacts will be disappointed that so distinguished an effort by so distinguished a group is so conceptually narrow.

Suffolk University

Joseph M. McCarthy

C. A. Bayly. *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830*. London and New York: Longman, 1989. Pp. xv, 295. Cloth, \$37.95; paper, \$19.50.

Here is a book that had the potential of being a welcome addition to the literature on imperial history. That potential is negated by a major flaw: the author's writing style.

Imperial Meridian is a volume in the *Studies in Modern History* series, which is designed to provide students with an introduction to important historical periods in works that are "stimulating and scholarly." The author, C. A. Bayly, is reader in Modern Indian History and a fellow of St. Catherine's College at the University of Cambridge. He is also joint editor of the *New Cambridge History of India*.

An increase of approximately 150 million people in the population of the British Empire is certainly a topic that can be studied with benefit. Bayly begins this study by looking at changes and problems in the Muslim World and conditions in Great Britain and its empire to 1790. He then examines the events world wide that led to the "Second British Empire," and finally discusses how that empire functioned. There may be questions about a few interpretations, but the author certainly has a thorough knowledge of the subject.

Two practical aspects of the book are particularly impressive and should serve as models for other historical works: a glossary of terms is provided at the beginning and a series of maps at the end. They are excellent guides to the material being discussed.

There is no doubt that a general survey of this type is needed. The book covers an often overlooked period in the growth of the British Empire and places that growth in the context of imperial, British, and world history.

Regretfully *Imperial Meridian* does not fulfill the primary goals of the *Studies in Modern History* series because it is extremely difficult to read. The author's writing style is unnecessarily complex and frequently requires the reader to go over a sentence several times to make sure its meaning is clear; sometimes even that is not sufficient. The following is a personal prejudice, but use of the parenthetical reference method makes comprehension more difficult; periodic parentheses that contain seemingly unrelated names and numbers interrupt the flow of words. This style becomes even more confusing when parenthetical explanations are used as well.

Graduate students and people particularly interested in this important period in British imperial development can use *Imperial Meridian* with benefit, although they too will find the work difficult. The book is not recommended for high school or undergraduate college students.

Kennesaw State College

K. Gird Romer

Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith. *Modern Latin America*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989. Second edition. Pp. xii, 436. Cloth \$39.95; paper, \$14.95.

A course in Latin American history, unfortunately, often becomes simply a class in the individual histories of various Latin American countries. This absence of any common bonds tends to have a "centrifugal" effect upon understanding, with students holding dearly to a number of disparate facts and questioning whether it was Esteban or Luis Echeverría who was president of Mexico. Through their synthesis of both the modernization and dependency theories, Thomas Skidmore and Peter Smith pull together into a "composite portrait" a history which they state

provides a comparative basis for understanding the context in which individual Latin American countries developed.

Following an excellent prologue, "Why Latin America?", Skidmore and Smith devote a chapter to the colonial and national periods and one to developing their modernization/dependency theme. They then analyze comparatively the historical development from 1880 to the present of six specific countries: Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Peru, Mexico and Cuba. Special chapters treating the Caribbean, Central America and the international relationship of Latin America to the United States and the world precede the epilogue, "What Future For Latin America?" In this last chapter, Skidmore and Smith again look at the dimensions of economic, social and political change, concluding, "In the future, as in past centuries, the fate of Latin America will depend largely on its relationship to the centers of international power."

Although many now seriously question the viability of the dependency theory, it, in conjunction with this sequential pattern of economic, social and political change, functions nicely as a structural framework for historical and comparative analysis. Students of recent Latin American history must question, however, the decision to leave out consideration of Venezuela/Colombia. The second edition does bring the specific histories up to date and adds the chapter on the Caribbean. yet this glaring omission would require that this text be supplemented.

The work, nonetheless, operates splendidly for several reasons. It is easily read, includes a number of political cartoons as well as pictures, and is a reasonably balanced and objective piece. Instructors, if they so choose, would have ample opportunity to impose an interpretation. They could even use the text's thematic approach to challenge the dependency theory. Maps, graphs, a number of interesting illustrations of political and social coalitions, and some valuable statistical appendices complement a nicely written narrative. A rather extensive list of all the various heads of state is nice but of questionable value. The bibliographical statements for each chapter should be especially helpful. The text, as well, offers special insight into the present Latin American situation. The organizational themes introduced in the second chapter provide a framework for understanding contemporary affairs and for putting people like Daniel Ortega and Manuel Noriega into historical context. This would allow instructors to divert student interest in current affairs to inquiries about how things got to be the way they are. Finally, its thematic approach works in a centripetal sense, pulling student minds toward those patterns and processes of change common to the Latin American historical experience.

This book might be appropriate for a specialized offering on the high school level. It, however, is ideally suited for the college undergraduate, for, in spite of its omissions, its use of a modified dependency approach provides an outstanding vehicle to deliver a coherent picture of Latin American history.

New Mexico Military Institute

Bill Gibbs

David H. Bennett. *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1968. Pp. X, 509. Cloth, \$29.95.

Professor Bennett has written an overview of American nativism that will rival John Higham's classic *Strangers in the Land*. It is characterized by erudition and breadth. The book's arresting cover depicts its major thesis. It shows the Statue of Liberty holding the torch of freedom high while peering out from behind a Ku Klux Klan hood. As Bennett sees it, right wing political activists, from the Know Nothings of the pre-Civil War period to the "hard" rightists of the 1970s and 80s have seen themselves as sentinels defending America and her precious dream from dangerous enemies. Throughout his study, Bennett analyzes the nativist impulse in American history with an eye to its own assumptions and dynamics. Further, he provides convincing historical context for each nativist movement and its followers.

Bennett argues that the nativist movements of the 19th century, the Know Nothings and the American Protective Association in particular, were each driven by fear of massive number of immigrants and the alien Catholic (and to a lesser extent Jewish) religious institutions that accompanied them. Their fears may have been misplaced and their solutions irrelevant to the problems they only vaguely understood, but the nativists saw themselves as the nation's protectors against alien invaders who would destroy the promise of American life. The Red Scare of 1919, by contrast, represented the confluence of two virulent forms of nativism: one directed against alien people, the other against alien ideas. As the former disintegrated in the aftermath of immigration