David Espinosa

Jesuit Student Groups, the Universidad Iberoamericana, and Political Resistance in Mexico, 1913–1979. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014. Pp. xxii + 208. Hb, \$55.00.

David Espinosa's *Jesuit Student Groups, the Universidad Iberoamericana, and Political Resistance in Mexico, 1913–1979* charts the evolution of Catholic student groups through the varying and often turbulent social and political climate of early- to mid-twentieth-century Mexico. He also examines the connections between right-wing politicians and the Catholic Church, and in so doing sheds light on church-state relations and the impact of Catholic ideology on the Right in post-revolutionary Mexico. In a well-written and researched case study, Espinosa details the history of the Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico's first Jesuit-sponsored Catholic university. His rationale is that "the early history of the Universidad Iberoamericana deepens our understanding of Catholic institutions during the *modus vivendi* between the Mexican State and the Roman Catholic Church" (111).

Espinosa reveals how the founders of the Universidad Iberoamericana managed to overcome a constitutional requirement that forbade any religious order from becoming involved in education. He also plots the intricacies of internal university politics and inter-university negotiations that led to the establishment of a Catholic university in 1940s Mexico. Specifically, he details the conferences that took place among church officials, executives from Mexico City's Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University of Mexico, UNAM) and directors of UNAM-affiliated Catholic preparatory schools, which led to the formation of UNAM's Centro Cultural Universitario (University Cultural Center, CCU). This name, Espinosa states, "provided it with valuable camouflage from its ideological adversaries" (79). The author elaborates that the CCU was not legally deemed to be a Catholic university, as it did not have an archbishop as rector. He then charts its fluctuating relationship with UNAM: initial dependence turned to "frustration with the UNAM's stranglehold over the CCU" (87) and led its Jesuit administrators to change the name to the Universidad Iberoamericana in 1952. Espinosa reveals that it was not until the 1970s that the Iberoamericana "was able to escape the UNAM's control" (82).

Throughout this time, Mexican society was also changing, and that transformation reached what was arguably its most challenging and tragic point during the student protests of 1968 and 1971. In describing the Iberoamericana students' reaction to and participation in these events, Espinosa emphasises the "cautious and conservative approach" of the Universidad Iberoamericana

administrators, who, in 1968, feared that the army might invade the campus (120). The university authorities advised against “an official stand [...] because the problem had become too muddled and there were too many political interests involved” (121). Espinosa’s depiction of the 1971 Corpus Christi massacre is particularly useful in that, unlike other accounts, it offers details of the events in Monterrey that culminated in the deaths of many students during the consequential protest in Mexico City.

Espinosa uses an impressive array of primary sources that he acknowledges are often biased, and is occasionally influenced by their partiality. For example, he presents the support of the Partido Católico Nacional [National Catholic Party, PCN] for General Victoriano Huerta’s counter-revolutionary government of 1913–14 as a “monumental political error for which the entire Catholic community in Mexico paid dearly” (27). Yet this was surely a decision that was in keeping with the party’s ideology of the time, as seen in its backing of “the Porfirian diplomat” Francisco León de la Barra rather than José María Pino Suárez as vice-president to Francisco Madero (25). Moreover, the PCN was totally in line with the church’s support for the Huerta government. As Espinosa underlines in his analysis of the Cristero Rebellion in chapter 2, the Catholic community did indeed pay dearly in the aftermath of the revolution, but this had as much to do with the fundamental values of the Catholic hierarchy as with any error in political tactics.

Jesuit Student Groups begins logically with the counter-revolution of 1913 and ends with the devastating earthquake in 1979 that caused many of the Universidad Iberoamericana buildings to collapse. However, its main focus and strength is its contribution to our understanding of church-state relations in the 1920s to 1940s and the impact of the Vatican II reforms on the stance of the Iberoamericana in the 1960s and 1970s. Espinosa’s inclusion of the confrontation in May 2012 between 131 Iberoamericana students and presidential candidate Enrique Peña Nieto serves well to underline Iberoamericana students’ continuing desire “to help influence and shape Mexico’s political agenda” (141). It also emphasises the ways in which students at this institution are continuing to react to changes in Mexican society.

Unfortunately, this edition of the book is poorly edited. There are several typos and it is repetitious at times. For example, details in the footnotes to chapter 3 regarding the Cristero rebellion (157n7) and reforms to the Asociación Católica de la Juventud Mexicana [Mexican Catholic Youth Association] (158nn1) are amply discussed within the text of the previous chapter. Additionally, on four occasions it is stated that Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, president of Mexico 2006–2012, is the son of one of the leaders of the Unión Nacional de Estudiantes Católicos [National Catholic Student Union].

This is a study that will nonetheless be of great use to academics and students with a specific interest in the dynamics between the Mexican church and state, and the role that students played within this relationship. Its inclusion of brief explanations of the events it encompasses also makes it accessible to interested non-specialists.

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