

It shows a country seeking to come to terms with its own identity, torn between the inroads of North American capital and traditional Catalan business, recently emancipated slaves and floods of *gallegos* seeking their fortune. With an almost eerie foretaste of many of the dynamics encountered in Cuba's twentieth-century identity crises, the Church representatives' accounts constitute a fascinating ecclesiastical perspective on Cuba in the midst of social ferment. Of particular interest is the account given of ongoing tension between Church and government authorities: the Liberals' anticlericalism and the effects of the 1868 *Revolución Gloriosa* in Spain clearly had a major (negative) impact on the Cuban Church, which was already in poor shape. The bishops thus complain about the constant attempt to strip Church control of cemeteries, allow civil marriage, encourage the arrival of Protestantism, and even harass clergy.

The greatest strength of the collection, however, has to reside in its detailed depiction of the Church's role at a time when Cuba sought to overthrow Spanish control. There are very few studies of the role of the Catholic Church in Cuba, with even less on the colonial period. The picture that emerges is hardly flattering: disinterest and indifference, and the lack of a traditional religious base, predominated in Cuban society. (Indeed one bishop estimated that only 3,000 *almas* of the 200,000 in the Havana archdiocese heard mass). The clergy are presented as lacking the *celo apostólico necesario*, living in virtual penury (even candles and vestments were lacking), with great distances to travel in order to reach parishioners, and as scarce in numbers. The picture thus emerges of an urban-centred, conservative, Spanish institution, widely greeted with indifference by most Cubans – virtually the same profile as was presented at the time of the 1959 revolution.

In sum, the book fills a definite lacuna, presenting valuable Church documents accompanied by a thoughtful, sensitive analysis. Manuel Maza is to be commended on his skilful editing abilities, and should be encouraged to continue his combing of scarce archival material.

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Lorenzo Meyer, *Su Majestad Británica contra la Revolución Mexicana, 1900–1950: El fin de un imperio informal* (México, D.F.: El Colegio de México, 1991), pp. 579.

Lorenzo Meyer's book addresses an important and long-neglected aspect of the history of the Mexican revolutionary state by 'describing and explaining' the various stages of the Mexican–British relationship between 1900 and 1950. In chapter one, an excellent synthesis of the scholarship of the last decades introduces the reader to the origins of Great Britain's economic presence in Mexico during the nineteenth century. Meyer paints a complex panorama of British economic activity in Mexico operating comfortably throughout the Porfiriato. The gathering storms of revolution in Mexico remained largely unrecognised by British observers until July 1913. Chapters three to six, covering the period from 1910 to 1928, are the impressive core of Meyer's study. Here he shows convincingly the steady weakening of the British position in Mexico as the revolution unfolds. During the Carranza presidency, the British position moved