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Mexico in Crisis. by Judith Adler Hellman

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*Mexico in Crisis.* By JUDITH ADLER HELLMAN. (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1978. Pp. vi, 229. \$15.75 cloth, \$7.95 paper.)

This book adds little to our understanding of the political economy of Mexico. With its alarmist tone it reminds one of the works of Mosk and Vernon whose books appeared just as the immediate problems that they were projecting well into the future were beginning to dissipate. So too with Adler's book. It is incredible, however, that the "Crisis" she analyzes includes but a single reference to the peso devaluation and capital flight of 1976 and not a word of the tremendous oil discoveries that have contributed so greatly to the restoration, both at home and abroad, of confidence in the country's political stability and economic performance. In fact, the question may well be raised as to what crisis she refers; if she means only the generalized set of problems facing the country for the past decade or two, a further question may well be raised as to why the book was written at all. Despite the blurb on the jacket, this is *not* "the first book to address the issues of political and economic development in Mexico in the historical context of the last sixty-five years." There is a large literature on the subject, as Adler's own bibliography attests.

Let me next comment on some specifics. First, the author makes curious use of her sources. She quotes Womack on Villa but seldom on Zapata; she uses the term Revolutionary Family without reference to Brandenburg; she cites Parkes on Madero rather than Ross or Cumberland; and she references *Excelsior* on rural-to-urban migration rather than Cornelius. Womack's and Brandenburg's books are at least listed in the bibliography, but the basic works of the last three authors are omitted. These are but the most flagrant examples of poor use of sources. Second, Adler uses old data for a 1978 "crisis." She cites the following statistics: population for 1973, GNP growth for 1970, GNP per capita for 1971, taxation rates for 1969, foreign investment for 1968-1973 (with no mention of the news laws on foreign investment and technology transfer), rate of U.S. investment for 1950-66, and government spending on education for 1950-66. Much more recent statistics are available. Third, Adler is very critical of the world capitalist economy and of U.S. influence in particular. She does not, however, develop any consistent dependency analysis and in fact offers little concrete evidence

of U.S. pressures exerted over Mexican political or economic decisions.

Few works are wholly without merit, and Adler does offer the reader some details and insight of value. Her chapter on "The Opposition" is quite good. She has a brief but excellent analysis of armed insurgents and of labor leaders who oppose the regime. Moreover, she treats the reader to an extraordinary inside view of the enormous complexity of political relations in her case study of the Central Union, the labor arm of the Mexican Communist Party. These ten pages are almost worth the price of the book.

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*The Overthrow of Allende and the Politics of Chile, 1964-1976.*

By PAUL E. SIGMUND. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977. Pp. xiii, 326. \$14.95.)

Paul Sigmund has written a readable narrative of the Chilean drama, centered on a comparison of the "Revolution in Liberty" of Eduardo Frei and the "Chilean Road to Socialism" of Salvador Allende. He also includes a good, brief account of the brutally repressive military regime that has ruled since 1973. As a careful recounting of these supremely hopeful, but ultimately tragic events, this book provides a welcome introduction. It also states clearly a reasonable interpretation of one version of those events.

Sigmund compares Frei's and Allende's strategies for achieving major reforms in a democracy. In his view, both leaders sought similar goals—land reform, national control of resources, redistribution of income, and reform of industrial relations. They also faced similar constraints. The resources for growth and reforms are always difficult to find in developing countries, but especially so in Chile's stagnant economy and chronic inflation. In any democracy, results must come quickly to avoid loss of political support, but with Chile's frequent elections, ideological parties, and legislature constitutionally divided from the executive, the pressures are particularly strong.

Although acknowledging the significance of broad international trends (such as the decline in copper prices) and the efforts of the