

interdisciplinary and regional boundaries, but also contributes implicitly to an academic understanding of Catholicism as full of diverse and often competing voices. It illustrates the thriving discussion and argument within Catholicism about the values and directions the Church should take, and in doing so demonstrates the wide reach and influence of the Catholic Church as both as a global institution and as a regionally rooted and historically specific power.

The book is thus also of direct interest to scholars of Latin America: as Klaiber argues in his chapter, the Church is the only institution that is large and powerful enough to compete with the state in Latin America, and this volume aptly displays the multiplicity of voices and agendas in the Church. Particularly, as Latin American countries grapple in different ways with the practices and values of democracy, this volume provides highly valuable comparative material which provokes analytical reflection on the link between Catholicism and democracy, and especially its implications for Latin America's developing relationship with the latter.

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Emelio Betances, *En busca de la ciudadanía: Los movimientos sociales y la democratización en la República Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, vol. CCLXI, 2016), pp. 646, pb.

Emelio Betances's book *En busca de la ciudadanía: Los movimientos sociales y la democratización en la República Dominicana* represents the most comprehensive review to date of the development of social movements in the Dominican Republic, covering the period from the 1960s to the early years of this century. The author embeds the analysis of social movements in his account of the major political events that have shaped the process of democratisation following the Trujillo dictatorship.

The book comprises ten chapters, in which the author demonstrates the breadth of the data collected in his research, including archival information, interviews with principal actors, and the presentation of key arguments from other scholars of this topic. The major arguments of the study in respect of the labour movement are: a) political parties have constantly meddled in social movements; b) this meddling has led to organisational fragmentation, well illustrated in the various divisions experienced by the labour movement over the years; c) labour organisations have been plagued by personalism ('*protagonismo*', in the author's words), which has severely limited internal democratisation. Over the years, therefore, the labour movement split, with five main unions eventually claiming to represent workers. Attempts to unify them never succeeded.

The first seven chapters focus heavily on the labour movement itself, with an analysis of the peasant movement presented in Chapter 2. The two movements reflected the political divisions in the country along party and ideological lines, with a prominent role played by leftist groups, the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) and the Catholic Church. At this time, during the 1970s, the government of Joaquín Balaguer followed a policy of labour and peasant repression, as part of an overall strategy to keep both movements under strict control.

The democratic opening of the late 1970s brought changes to the labour movement. First, there was the beginning of the neoliberal reforms to contend with; second, there

was growing competition among political parties to control the labour movement. The latter resulted in the increasing fragmentation of labour confederations, with the most prominent case being that of the Central General de Trabajadores (CGT), where leftist organisations and the PLD were in contention over its control. It is worth mentioning that, in the 1970s, the CGT was the most important and belligerent labour confederation, with its critical stand towards the Balaguer regime.

With the beginning of the Antonio Guzmán administration (PRD, 1978–82), the overall level of labour activism in the country increased; examples of this were the reactions of the powerful transport unions to increases in fuel prices. They organised two national strikes, one in 1979 and another in 1980. These paralysed the country because, without transport, most people could not get to work.

To bring on board a segment of the labour movement in support of the government, the PRD founded the Unión General de Trabajadores Dominicanos (UGTD) shortly after taking power. By then, there were already five labour confederations in the country linked to different political parties, and, as the economic situation deteriorated in the 1980s, the PRD administrations, both those of the Guzmán and of the Salvador Jorge Blanco (1982–6) governments, faced increasing labour unrest.

In April 1984, the situation deteriorated further with the announcement of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund, riots at the end of the month and a call for a general strike in early May. The government response to the riots was repression – shocking, since the PRD had been viewed as the party of the poor. Following this there took place the so-called ‘*diálogos tripartitos*’ (tripartite dialogues) in which government, business associations and labour unions took part, with the mediation of a representative of the Catholic Church. These dialogues lasted for the rest of the decade and into the 1990s. Excluded from these dialogues was the rising ‘popular movement’ that was organised mostly on a geographical and professional basis.

While the labour unions made deals with business and government, and became less combative, the so-called popular movement gained in the power to convene national strikes against the government’s economic measures (or lack thereof). The rising mobilisation of the popular sector was also a reaction to Balaguer’s attempt to remain in power through questionable means in 1990.

Chapters 5 to 7 are mostly devoted to the analysis of specific unions in the service sector, such as those in the electricity and telephone companies and the teachers’ union. These were all very powerful and set their own agenda, independently of the labour confederations. Chapters 8 and 9 are devoted to the territorially based popular movement, which began to develop during the debt crisis of the early 1980s. The announcement of austerity measures was followed by higher inflation; people in poor neighbourhoods revolted. At first their protests took the form of random riots, but later they forged better organisational structures, and confronted the government repeatedly up to the early 1990s. Their significance vis-à-vis the traditional labour movement increased; the latter was engaged in the tripartite dialogues, through which workers in the formal economy made some legal and economic gains.

The last chapter covers the period 1992–2014, when the strength of social movements varied. The late 1990s registered significant mobilisation; this dwindled in the early 2000s, to increase in strength again after 2008. Unlike the movements of the past, those of recent years have been issue oriented and middle-class based. Examples analysed in the book include the environmental movement and the movement to increase funding for education (known as the ‘4% Movement’).

A main conclusion of the book is that the state has faced the impossible task of accommodating international neoliberal demands whilst responding adequately to citizens' demands for better living conditions.

This book is a must-read for anyone interested in understanding social movements in the Dominican Republic. It is well researched, clearly written and comprehensive in the periods and topics covered.

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Mary C. Karasch, *Before Brasília: Frontier Life in Central Brazil* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2016), pp. xxiv + 430, \$65.00, hb.

Mary Karasch has a knack for writing landmark books. Her *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1850* (Princeton University Press, 1987) remains an indispensable work for scholars of the period during which slavery peaked in the Brazilian capital. She subsequently turned her attention to colonial Goiás, the vast interior captaincy that covers modern-day Goiás, Tocantins, the Distrito Federal (Brasília), and parts of adjacent states. The product of decades of research, *Before Brasília* is, like *Slave Life*, a thoroughly researched, comprehensive work; historians of Brazil's interior will rely on it for years to come.

Karasch admits in the introduction that no 'one theory' orients this book and that readers will instead discover 'many interwoven strands' as she examines the 'central theme': 'the evolution of frontier violence and enslavement that ultimately led to the consolidation of white rule over a majority population of color, both free and enslaved' (p. xxi). The brief conclusion reflects on central Brazil's frontiers and borderlands and Karasch argues that the 'captaincy of Goiás clearly does not fit the old Turnerian vision of the frontier' (p. 301), something of an understatement, given the extent to which scholarship has demonstrated that the North American West did not conform to Frederick Jackson Turner's view of the frontier as a cradle of democracy and a space of opportunity for all. Instead central Brazil

went through many frontiers: a slaving frontier as in Angola, a mission frontier under the Franciscans and Jesuits, a mining frontier that led to Indian removal and even genocide, a trading and raiding frontier as in Araucanian Chile, a farming frontier as land-hungry settlers invaded areas in the north and west, and a cattle frontier in the nineteenth century (p. 303).

*Before Brasília* is not, however, organised as the history of a succession of frontiers, but as a chapter-by-chapter discussion of colonial Goiás's principal social groups: the indigenous nations, the invaders, the state and its men, the white property holders, African and *crioulo* slaves, the Church and the faithful, women, and free people of colour.

Paulista slave raiders' *bandeiras* (expeditions) first reached Goiás in the 1590s and ranged widely during the seventeenth century; from the north, Jesuit-led *entradas* (also expeditions) sought indigenous peoples to convert to Christianity and to herd into mission villages (until 1759). While colonial governments nominally authorised some *bandeiras*, many more were informally organised by early colonists and or city councils and therefore left little documentation. In time, *bandeirantes* discovered the gold deposits that prompted the first Luso-Brazilian settlements in the 1720s. Expeditions to pacify indigenous peoples continued into the nineteenth century,