Peter Gerhard. *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain.*


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nations and possessions.

As Darwin taught, the method of scientifically sound narrations of a multitude of evidence can give an argument immense persuasiveness. David Ziskind has written such a book. I strongly recommend it for its clear insights into the well-being of the labor community.


Six brief chapters introduce this work, covering New Spain from 1519 to 1821. The conquest, encomiendas, political history, ecclesial administration, and population and settlement are the topics. Each of these chapters has a map of simple design, easy to read, and quite essential. With all this the reader is introduced to the bumpy road to a settled Spanish encomienda system, the fractionation of the land into alcaldia mayores and corregimientos, and the various territorial-administrative arrangements and re-arrangements of the Roman Catholic Church. Sections then follow on source of information, place-name spelling, citations and abbreviations, and suggestions for research.

We then come to the bulk of the volume: the 129 political units, treated in alphabetical order, from Acapulco to Zimpango de la Laguna, each with a mercifully crystal-clear place-name and boundary map. For each of these territorial units, in two or three pages, one is informed of encomiendos, alternate place-names, population and settlement and their changes (and sometimes notes on ethnicity), a few sentences of geographical or historical import, and some remarks about sources of information.

The volume closes with an appendix of modern Mexican states and their colonial components, and a glossary of Spanish (and some Indian) terms.

This does NOT constitute a historical geography of New Spain. The word "Guide" in the title is to be taken seriously. This is a comprehensive source
book and as such should serve as a veritable goldmine for specialists for whom the development of territorial organization is an important component of their research interest.

The other two volumes are organized on like manner. "The Northern Frontier of New Spain" covers northern Mexico and adjacent portions of what is presently southwestern U.S.A. "The Southeastern Frontier of New Spain" Concerns the Chiapas-Yucatan "end" of Mexico for the years 1511-1821. All three volumes are newly revised editions. The works originally appeared during the 1972-1982 decade.

Laurence Grambow Wolf


This is a remarkably incisive sequence of essays dealing with the convulsive disappearance of Communist governments as we had previously known them. Jowitt creates a slightly zig-zag impression by his prognoses and by his later qualifying corrections, the essays having been written from 1978 through 1991. He dates the "Leninist extinction", a metaphor drawn from paleontology, in 1989. (Gorbachov was still barely clinging to power when he concluded.) Jowitt's diagnoses and prognoses are all remarkable shrewd, particularly in his pointing out how convulsions lead to other convulsions as in challenged boundaries and communal identities. Resurgences of old nationalisms and religious fanatics move onto created vacuums, those of collapsed Leninism and of Third World territories alike, now that Cold War alignments no longer obtain.

"Modern political culture", to borrow the phrase form Colin Lucas, largely has consisted of liberal and socialist modes of wishful thinking and pious rhetoric. Jowitt looks deeper, into the underlying values and social structure, which themselves are caught up in the maelstrom. All of this may not quite be "without form and void" as Jowitt suggest. But he usefully undermines "Superpower" cliches and presumptions.

Pitirim Sorokin, the first president of I.S.C.S.C., through personal experiences as well as scholarly work, had much to day about crises and calamity-driven changes in values. Although he died ten years before Jowitt began the essays before us, there are notable affinities between the two scholars, not least their proclivities to inspire the charge of "pessimism" from relentlessly hopeful liberals. (One of the book blurbs for Jowitt mentions an "eventual definitive historical sociology." Zimmerman referred to Sorokin's "historical sociology", while Sorokin called his own work a "social philosophy" or a "macrosociology".)