

occupation. The last resource, and sometimes the only one, was prostitution, a degrading step to take for any woman trained in traditional Roman social *mores*. Both garment workers and prostitutes earned only subsistence wages. Evans concludes that, contrary to the freedom that conquest brought to aristocratic women, thousand of nameless wives and daughters of the nameless men serving in the armies faced a bleak existence with little hope for the future.

Finally, just as the status of women changed due to warfare, so did the position of children in Roman society. It is clear from the earliest sources that unwanted babies were exposed, and there is also ample evidence of child abuse, both physical and sexual. Paradoxically, however, while the wars brought a huge influx of slave children to Italy to suffer abuse, they also seem to have encouraged an increasing affection by the elite for their own sons and daughters. According to Evans, this state of affairs did not occur, as has been suggested, because of the erosion of *patria potestas* since the authority of the absent father was usually replaced by *materna auctoritas* which tended to impose greater strictness on fatherless sons than greater indulgence. The author suggests that the affection shown to youths in the later republic was the result of children having been given over earlier to surrogate parents, slaves who did not share the same values of strictness toward children that their masters felt necessary, thus establishing a pattern for future generations.

Many of us who have taught about Roman women have no doubt compared their experience in the late republic with the emancipation of women in the United States during World War II. Professor Evans has given us a greater perspective on a subject which continues to influence societies even today. His research is thorough and his arguments convincing. An added bonus is that it is also enjoyable reading.

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Ricardo Falla — *Masacres de la selva: Ixcán, Guatemala (1975-1982)*. Guatemala City: Editorial Universitaria, 1992. Pp. xii, 253.

Occasionally, a book of social history emerges that makes us realize how powerful the written word is, how important a weapon it can be. Ricardo Falla's *Masacres de la selva* is such a book. Not only is it a compelling and horrifying account of the terrors of Guatemala in the early 1980s, but its recent publication has provoked desperate measures from the Guatemalan government and the military.

The book itself is fairly simple in conception and research. Falla, a Jesuit and anthropologist who has worked for many years in villages in Guatemala and refugee communities throughout central America and Mexico, set out in 1983 to recount the military's activities in the Ixcán region of northwestern Guatemala which led to the flood of refugees from that area in 1982. He collected five months of testimony from refugees in the camp called Puerto Rico in Chiapas, Mexico, in 1983 and 1984. Using this testimony, he painstakingly reconstructs a series of army killings, tortures, and massacres stretching back to 1975, but concentrated in the months of March, April, and May of 1982. In doing so, he has created the most damning, most vivid, and, in

some ways, the most horrific description of the army's counter-insurgency campaign that exists.

In a typically humble fashion, Falla tells us in introducing the book that what we are to read is the voice of others, of those that against all odds survived these events, and were prepared to tell him about it; he has been lucky enough to be the vessel through which their history can be recorded. Of course, Falla is more than that as is anyone who collects oral history. He sets the accounts into perspective by detailing the various stages of the army campaign (from selective killings, to scorched earth, to the attacks on the communities in resistance — that is, those who fled their homes, but not Guatemala). He also explains the army's motives (although anyone looking for an exhaustive explanation of the army's counter-insurgency program has other, more complete works from which to choose). Falla orders the various testimonies and in an unobtrusive manner, points out important elements in these testimonies: the role of religious and political divisions in weakening the community response and the army's use of ethnic division to further their campaigns being two most obvious examples.

Falla is scrupulous in detailing the circumstances of the 773 civilian deaths which occurred in this small corner of Guatemala — mostly in three months of nightmarish violence in 1982. His accounts are usually based on numerous sources, and he takes pains to inform the reader when they, and the list of victims which accompany the accounts, are less completely verified.

It is the voices of the survivors that dominate this account, though. The testimony of the witnesses — those who hid in ditches, or were kept with other victims and able to escape at the last minute, or were injured and faked death, at times not able to see anything but able to hear it all too clearly — spring from these pages to haunt the reader. The two long descriptions of what happened at Cuarto Pueblo over four days from 14-17 of March 1982 (the scene of the largest massacre in which at least 324 people were killed, many buried alive, and the entire village burned) is perhaps the most effective and most haunting. Through these testimonies, Falla gives us the most intimate picture available of how this army campaign was experienced in perhaps the most violent area of Guatemala during the counter-insurgency: the confusion, the reluctance to leave one's home and land, and the vain hopes that membership in right-wing political organizations or religious groups would protect them from the military.

Some criticisms could be made this work. On rare occasions, the descriptions and the testimonies are repetitive and plodding. More importantly, perhaps, nowhere in the work does Falla tackle the issue of guerrilla responsibility in provoking these attacks. But these problems are far outweighed by what the book does accomplish.

Part of the importance of this book comes from the atmosphere in which it was published. It comes at a time when the government is in the midst of peace negotiations with the combined guerrilla forces, the URNG. Two major questions that dominate much of the peace process in Guatemala are the role of the military in a new Guatemala, and the possibility of prosecuting military officers for their role in the violence. The military establishment is clearly frightened and Falla's book completely destroys its argument about guerrilla responsibility for the atrocities. Moreover, the book was published in Guatemala by the national university. The government's reaction indicates its concern. A formal ceremony to announce publication was scheduled in September, 1992, but was cancelled after pressure from the government.

This publication and the support the university community gave to Rigoberta Menchú's candidacy for the Nobel Prize were considered to be the reasons for the government's threat to withhold already promised (and constitutionally guaranteed) funds from the institution. In the meantime, the military has attempted to denounce Ricardo Falla, claiming he is closely linked to the guerrillas. If a Commission of Truth is established as part of the peace settlement, as the URNG demands, Falla's book will be an important document in its considerations.

Despite the horrendous nature of the events described in this book, Falla both begins and ends the book with a message of hope. In explaining why he felt compelled to write about the massacres, he tells us:

As terrible as the narration that one presents is, the reality that it announces is more marvellous: I am alive. This book [gives voice]...to the hundreds of witnesses that want to say to the Guatemalan people and to the nations of the world: we are alive, incredibly, we are alive (ii).

In concluding, he is equally hopeful:

In the resistance, life begins to conquer death from the moment the population escapes the hands of the military.... [In the resistance] a new family is born in which orphans are [everyone's] children, a new community is born where members are brothers and *compañeros*, a new church is born where catholics and *evangélicos*, *carismáticos* and traditionalists, understand each other.... All this is life (228).

It is a measure of the power of Falla's pen, and the strength and courage of the people who testify in this amazing book, that despite the horror it leaves us, too, with this sense of hope.

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Gilles Gallichan — *Livre et politique au Bas-Canada, 1791-1849*. Sillery (Québec) : Les éditions du Septentrion, 1991, 519 p.

Historien et bibliothécaire, Gilles Gallichan a mis à profit cette double formation pour étudier le rôle du livre et de l'imprimé dans la vie politique du Bas-Canada durant le XIX^e siècle. L'A. présente d'abord un tableau des institutions culturelles de la ville de Québec, en particulier de ses bibliothèques, puis un résumé des nouvelles structures politiques à partir de 1791. Cette courte mise en situation est commode, à défaut d'être neuve.

Quatre chapitres forment la seconde partie, consacrée à l'analyse de la relation entre imprimé et action politique. Comme on le sait, la production d'imprimés québécois, relativement modeste (moins de 6 000 titres entre 1764 et 1850), tourne alors autour de deux pôles qui ne sont pas toujours isolés : la religion et la politique. Les brochures, beaucoup plus nombreuses que les livres, transmettent idéologies et projets politiques tout en servant, selon l'A., la « mission d'éducation populaire que s'étaient fixée les premières générations de parlementaires québécois » (87). Au début du siècle, l'imprimé — et en particulier le journal — élargit l'audience du monde