

ment officials outside of official channels. Indeed, Brazil's foreign ministry was characterized by its rather weak position in international affairs, which were more dominated by the finance ministry, bankers, and military officers than by Brazilian ambassadors and consuls.

Bueno tends to think of Brazilian national interests as they were defined and defended by Itamarati. But interests were diverse, divisive, and shifting. Regional, class, and ethnic divisions affected Brazil's foreign affairs. Greater attention as to why Brazilians acted in certain ways and the degree of national sovereignty Brazil enjoyed would have enriched this study. As an exposition of the actions and policies of Brazil's foreign ministry and consuls this is a welcome addition to a field that has been too long neglected. But to return foreign relations to a central place in historical studies, more subtle analysis that considers cultural as well as political and economic issues, and that includes a broader range of participants and a wider array of sources, would help.

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Tropical Multiculturalism: A Comparative History of Race in Brazilian Cinema and Culture. By ROBERT STAM. Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empires, Nations. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xvii, 409 pp. Cloth, \$59.95. Paper, \$19.95.

In *Tropical Multiculturalism*, Robert Stam has produced a fascinating new examination of Brazilian race and culture. His exploration of representations of blackness (along with a subtheme that analyzes whiteness) will challenge scholars from numerous disciplines, especially through his use of a comparative United States/Brazil methodology that has fallen out of favor in recent decades. Indeed, by applying a term ("multicultural") used rarely in Brazil, Stam opens up new frontiers in the analysis of both language and social action.

Tropical Multiculturalism focuses on filmic representations, and from this perspective the argument that multiculturalism is a "pan-American" phenomena is well founded. For Stam, Brazil and the United States have had a mutual impact on each other "[ever] since the first Jews . . . came to North America via Brazil [and ever since] Afro-Brazilians . . . owned land in New York City in the seventeenth century" (p. 18). However, long-term interconnectedness, whether in the realm of artistic influences or the business of cinema, never prevented Brazil and the United States from developing in markedly different ways. Indeed, as Stam points out, Brazil is marked by the visibility of its syncretism, whereas the United States is founded on the notion that syncretism is hidden.

Much of *Tropical Multiculturalism* probes specific Brazilian films for both content and context. Examining everything from production to soundtracks, Stam shows a constancy in notions of race in films produced by both the Hollywood-like Vera Cruz studios and by the openly anti-U.S. directors of the Cinema Novo. One fascinating discus-

sion surrounds portrayals of sexual relations between black men and white women, creating, as Stam notes, a situation that “scapegoat(s) the white woman for what is primarily the responsibility of the white man” (p. 283). This twist on the Gilberto Freyre thesis suggests one of the many strong points of *Tropical Multiculturalism*, in this case Stam’s willingness to explore issues of gender (or class) along with race. A surprising point also emerges from Stam’s examination of soundtracks and how frequently anti-imperialist filmmakers looked to the United States for musical inspiration. Showing how music as wide-ranging as James Brown’s “Get It on Up” and Brenda Lee’s “I’m Sorry” found their way into films made in the seventies, Stam’s point about syncretism and about class presumptions (how many Brazilians would know or understand the lyrics to songs in English?) are made clear.

Tropical Multiculturalism will make an excellent teaching tool. The book is organized both chronologically and thematically and can be read in one sitting or over the course of a semester. Stam is helpful in suggesting where to find many of the films he analyzes, and his forays into literature and popular music place film squarely within the realm of the broader arts, rather than relegating it to some hyper-popular culture corner. Teachers of both United States and Latin American history will find the chapter on Orson Welles and his attempts to make a film about Brazil particularly useful, especially since a documentary on the project (entitled *Its All True* and including much of the film Welles shot) is easily and inexpensively available.

I hope that the certain success of *Tropical Multiculturalism* will convince Robert Stam to write a second volume exploring filmic representations of race outside the traditional black/white/indigenous continuum, an area that demands attention now that the Brazilian national paradigm seems to be veering towards multiple ethnicities rather than the single “raça” model of the past. *Tropical Multiculturalism* is a model piece of scholarship. It is well written, analyzes new information in exciting ways, and opens up important discussions about race and culture for numerous disciplines.

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Actores, ideas y proyectos políticos en la Argentina contemporánea.

Edited by SUSANA BIANCHI and MARÍA ESTELA SPINELLI. Buenos Aires: Instituto de Estudios Histórico-sociales, Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 1997. Tables. Notes. Bibliographies. 308 pp. Paper.

This collection of essays mostly comprises works by young historians affiliated with the Universidad Nacional in Tandil, Buenos Aires. The Instituto de Estudios Histórico-sociales in Tandil has leapt to prominence during recent years on the strength of youth, talent, and vigor. It has established a distinguished reputation for the range and quality of its publications, particularly in the areas of historical demography, immigration studies, and, more recently, the history of the Argentine southern frontier. *Actores, ideas y proyectos políticos*, however, focuses on political history and mainstream topics such as the