The State, Literacy, and Popular Education in Chile, 1964–1990. By ROBERT AUSTIN**.** Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003. Photographs. Illustrations. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xlii, 370 pp. Cloth, $105.00.

This substantial volume constitutes an enormous challenge both to Latin Americanists and to those who seek points of comparison in the analysis of historical processes. The first challenge rests in the fact that the state has been a channel for the diffusion of diverse ideologies and political leanings, which are not at all easy to untangle due to the way they shade into one another. The next challenge lays in the fact that the educational system has constituted one of the principal focal points at the disposal of Latin America's "*gobiernos de turno*," without making explicit their ideological underpinnings. The third challenge presented by this book is the fact that although Austin refers to a particular period in which political differences were profound and opposed, he also rigorously examines the entire historical background of the educational system in Chile, from the founding of the republic through the early nineteenth century.

Various educational policies ran up against all kinds of conflicts when put into practice, but rarely have they been analyzed with such zeal with respect to their historical context as Austin does here. Liberals, for example, have managed to erase the connections between politics and their respective national educational guidelines. However, Austin more than demonstrates such relationships, beginning with those distant liberal traditions during the formation of the state on through to the recent period of the governments of Frei, Salvador Allende, and Augusto Pinochet. He thus achieves the goals he sets forth, "based on the epistemological rupture wrought by intellectuals

clustered around left parties, research institutes, and the university reform movement" (p. xxxi).

The configuration of the Chilean educational system from 1810 to 1920, which he calls the "teaching state," awarded priority to elementary education, with the clear aim of creating obedient citizens. Later, what he calls the "state of compromise" (1920–1964) expanded (always under a patriarchal framework) into the secondary and university educational systems. Something similar occurred in some other countries, although in Chile, co-ed primary education did not emerge in parallel with adult literacy programs. Other countries had already implemented these essential and general functions, part of the liberal mindset, in the 1930s. Austin calculates that at the dawn of the twentieth century, 95 percent of the adult population was excluded from the political system and that only one-fourth of adults over the age of 15 were literate in the period after 1930. The change in both situations would come about only after 1938, when the middle classes burst onto the political scene, with their corresponding educational demands. Groups of volunteers taught in public and private schools, or by means of radio broadcasts. "The Brigadas, both local and mobile, taught literacy to an average of 8,500 adults annually in the two decades after 1944" (p. 45).

In the middle of the 1960s, adult-literacy campaigns intensified, with the clear intention of transforming the established regimes. Traditional liberal education, which sought to reproduce the ideology of the power elite and which served their purposes, was condemned as backward, "*bancaria*" or passive, behaviorist, and even parasitical. From that point on, education—both general and adult—consisted of promoting an active and liberating participation, as well as change in the face of the control exercised by the few over an enormous oppressed majority. Paulo Freire's theories constituted

alternatives to this established order, which was identified as a true system of "institutionalized violence" or repressive measures from the state. Teaching the rural and urban masses to read implied returning to the workers, without gender distinctions, the tools to improve their own social position. "Human capital theory conceives of education as training in dominant skills and knowledge for more efficient production and effective consumption within capitalism" (p. 50). The conflict between popular and hegemonic education, although it remained unresolved, did witness a certain decrease under the administration of Frei Montalvo (1964–70). With the meteoric Allende government, it seemed that the balanced shifted against the last of the two contenders, but it was the dictatorship of Pinochet that pushed the balance in favor of neoliberalism. The persistence of this regime frustrated all attempts at social transformation. The official textbooks used under these administrations, which Austin analyzes, allow us to conclude that such evidence is categorical and irrefutable.

Among the book's many merits, especially deserving of mention are the author's deft approach and combination of source materials more commonly used in history and sociology, as well as the marvelous combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. He managed to make connections between the past and the present, something that is made difficult by the social complexity of the contemporary period. He hints at struggles for social control between subaltern and hegemonic groups, despite his substantial experience and undeniable sensitivity toward the educational process. In spite of Austin's scientific rigor, abundant details, and tremendous scholarship in offering sufficient historical evidence, he fails to explain the interactions between various historical processes, as well as between these process and educational systems. Some questions remained unanswered; for example: What are the social functions of education today? Why does the state have to direct such processes? How we support

those who have been excluded up till now to better their current situation? In the end, this book will not go unnoticed, since it will stimulate other timely and similar lines of investigation; especially, if other scholars adopt the same methodologies, in order to compare and to make countervailing criticisms.

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